

“The environment is God’s gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole.” — Pope Benedict, *Encyclical Caritas in Veritate*

Lenten Carbon Fast 2010

As Catholic Christians we have a responsibility to be **wise stewards of God’s Creation** and each of us must decide how we can improve our stewardship to safeguard God’s Creation now and for future generations. The Archdiocese Environmental Outreach Committee suggests the following list of 40 carbon fasting actions everyone can consider as a part of your Lenten preparation for the Easter season. Each of these actions will reduce our production of climate change pollution and help to preserve God’s great gift of Creation.

St. Thomas Aquinas Parish
Green Committee

*Edited for local use from
the Environmental Outreach
Committee, Archdiocese
of Washington DC*



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you ... so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” —Matthew 6:2-4</p> <p>Ash Wednesday reminds us to be faithful in action even when no one is paying attention. If we are all living in harmony with the rest of God’s Creation, especially when no one is looking, our households, our churches, and our society will also be transformed.</p> <p>Remove one light bulb from your home and live without its light for the next 40 days. This will decrease your energy use, and act as a reminder of your Lenten Carbon Fast.</p>			<p>17</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Turn down your thermostat by at least one degree. Aim for 68 degrees during the day and 60 degrees at night. Program your thermostat if you can. Always turn the heat off when you leave home.</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Go meat-free today. Christians have been eating less meat during Lent for centuries. Choosing meat-free meals is one of the most powerful things you can do to reduce your carbon footprint. (BayAreaVeg.org)</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Make one of your journeys more environmentally friendly today. Could you combine two trips? Carpool rather than driving solo? (3bl.me/8aczrn) Bike or walk, or take bus or Metro, instead of driving? (BikeSiliconValley.org)</p>
<p>21</p> <p>Remember your baptism today, and the power of water. Try to conserve: Leave a bucket in the shower or kitchen sink, and collect “grey water” to water the plants. Have a lawn? Consider a rain barrel so you can water the lawn with rain. (ValleyWater.org)</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Check windows and doors for drafts with a ribbon or feather. If it flutters, make or buy a draft dodger, or seal leaks with caulk and weatherstripping.</p>	<p>23</p> <p>If you’re going to be away from an appliance for over an hour, turn it off as you leave the room. Even on an “energy-saver” setting, a computer, game console, or TV wastes more energy when it’s on than if you really turn it off.</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Be aware of your hot water use today. Turn off the water while scrubbing dishes. Take a shower instead of a bath, and try to take a shower that lasts half as long as usual.</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Let your dishwasher breathe. Run the dishwasher only with a full load, and skip the energy-intensive drying cycle by choosing the “air-dry” option; or just open the door overnight.</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Look to purchase locally-grown food today. Plan to walk to a farmers’ market this weekend, or consider joining a community-supported agriculture (CSA) group that delivers local produce (localharvest.org).</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Plan ahead to bring reusable bags with you to get groceries today. If you already use reusable grocery bags, purchase a set of reusable produce bags for fruits and veggies. (ecobags.com)</p>
<p>28</p> <p>Run your washing machine only with full loads. Turn the knob on your washing machine to “cold/cold”, and leave it there. Washing your clothes in cold water gets them just as clean as washing in hot water, but uses half the energy.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>Speak out! Ask our leaders to take action on climate change today. (daysix.org, lsky.org)</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Turn off lights you’re not using. Shut off lights as you leave a room. You can put reminders on your switchplates or install motion sensors (about \$20 each) that turn lights off automatically (ShopIPL.org).</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Be aware of how much food you discard this week. Look for opportunities to avoid wasting food by planning well, and eating leftovers.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Consider composting your food waste. Put the nutrients from food waste back into the soil, not into a landfill. Learn more about composter options for indoors and outdoors. (3bl.me/fmf29e)</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Pick up at least one piece of litter on the ground when you are out walking today, and dispose of it properly.</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Making travel plans? Consider getting there without flying. If you have to fly, balance out the carbon impact by buying offsets. Fund a project that prevents one ton of greenhouse gases for each ton that your trip will cause. (3bl.me/std348)</p>

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Give the dryer a rest. 7 Hang your clothes to dry on a rack or clothesline (3bl.me/wmq35y). Many households spend more than \$100 a year on the energy used by their dryer, while the air can dry your clothes for free.	Many electronics draw power even when off. Today, 8 unplug your appliances that are off; place computers, radios, and TVs on a power strip, and turn it off between uses. Also, unplug your phone charger when it's not charging.	9 End junk mail that wastes resources. Stop unwanted catalogs (CatalogChoice.org), credit card offers (1-888-5-OPTOUT), and other junk mail (DMAchoice.org). Or hire a service to cancel it for you (41pounds.org).	10 Check the tire pressure of your car today, or take it to a gas station. Cars with low tire pressure get lower mileage.	Save paper today: 11 print double-sided, or wrap your next present in color comics, or a reusable gift bag. To reduce paper towel use in public restrooms, order "These Come From Trees" stickers: (3bl.me/ef2zhd)	Minimize disposables 12 today. Bring a mug to get coffee. Use cloth napkins at a meal. Wipe up with a rag instead of paper towels. Stick a fork in your purse or briefcase for the next time you eat out during the workday.	Begin spring gardening by going 13 organic. Grow your lawn and garden without toxic chemicals, and order a "Pesticide-Free" lawn sign! (PesticideFreeLawns.org)
The world's 14 poor will be hit hardest by climate change. Join Catholics taking action and raising our voice on behalf of Creation and the poor. Sign the St. Francis Pledge: (CatholicClimateCovenant.org)	Many caring people 15 are working to protect Creation. Find a green organization today, and sign up for their e-newsletter. (SierraClub.org, GreenAmericaToday.org.)	Are you 16 recycling everything you can? Refresh your memory today on what items your city or county allows for curbside recycling. Place an item that can be recycled, but that you usually don't recycle, into your bin.	17 Support clean energy by purchasing "Renewable Energy Credits". It may be an option through your utility, by switching energy suppliers, or by purchasing RECs online. (green-e.org)	18 When heating water on the stove, use a pot with a lid to conserve energy.	It's hard to open 19 ourselves up to the realities of the climate crisis. Today, learn something new about climate change. (AmericasClimateChoices.org, ClimateCrisis.net)	20 Celebrate Spring! Plant a tree (Canopy.org), or support tree-planting in other countries (Greenbeltmovement.org, CO2covenant.org)
21 Have an " embrace the silence " Sunday. Turn off everything, and unplug it if you can. No TV, no radio, no ring tones. Stay home after church. It'll be good for the soul.	22 Purchase more mindfully today. Print, cut out, and tape together a "Wallet Buddy" where your credit card can remind you of questions to ask yourself before buying: (NewDream.org/walletbuddy2.pdf)	Own stock? Find 23 out if shareholder resolutions have been filed to "green" the company's practices. (ProxyDemocracy.org) Stay informed and vote your proxy on behalf of greener business practices. (ICCR.org, 3bl.me/rk4fw5)	24 Help people on the "front lines" of climate change. Carbon Covenant links US churches with carbon-reducing projects in developing countries: (CO2covenant.org). Others bring clean energy to villages: (SELF.org, EnergyCures.org)	25 Subscribe to any magazines? If so, write an email to the publishers today, asking them to switch to environmentally responsible paper and printing practices (BetterPaper.org).	Learn about 26 mountain-top removal mining: Appalachian mountains are blown apart, poisoning streams. (3bl.me/dzs4ve) How much of this coal is for your electricity? (iLoveMountains.org/myconnection)	Help your kitchen 27 fridge function efficiently by placing jugs of water inside (water retains cold better than air), and by pulling the fridge out to scrub down the coils. Second fridge or freezer in the basement? Try to make do with one.
Think today about 28 the role of our church in its local environment. Could our community better care for Creation? Get involved with our green work, and get inspired by other "green souls" through Interfaith Power & Light (interfaithpower.org).	Show reverence 29 for life and for the Earth today by obeying the speed limit when driving. Every 10 mph in speed reduces fuel economy by 4 mph, and increases the risk of getting into an accident.	Place an insulating 30 cover over your hot water heater. You can find a "blanket" at most hardware stores. (If you have an electric water heater, it's an easy job to do yourself. If you have an oil or gas-powered heater, you may need a plumbing professional.)	31 Replace the incandescent light bulbs in your house, even if they haven't burned out yet, with CFLs. Replacing one incandescent light bulb with a CFL saves 150 lbs of carbon dioxide a year. Don't forget to save one CFL for Maundy Thursday. (ShopIPL.org)	1 Maundy Thursday Replace the light bulb you removed on Ash Wednesday with an energy-saving CFL lightbulb. Learn more about how your electricity is generated with the online PowerProfiler. (3bl.me/5wx8cs)	2 Good Friday "The brutal consumption of Creation begins where God is not ..." —Pope Benedict XVI	3 Holy Saturday It can be difficult to contemplate our own end. Think today about greening your "final arrangements," when the time comes. One option is to help protect natural lands: (3bl.me/w5a9vw)

4 Easter "At a time of world food shortage, of financial turmoil, of old and new forms of poverty, of disturbing climate change ... of growing fears over the future, it is urgent to rediscover **grounds for hope**. Let no one draw back from this peaceful battle that has been launched by Christ's Resurrection ... Christ is looking for men and women who will help him to affirm his victory using ... justice and truth, mercy, forgiveness and love."

— Pope Benedict XVI, *Urbi et Orbi*, Easter 2009



Take some time today to reflect on all of the activities that you have performed during Lent, and how they have brought you into greater harmony with the Earth and all life. Conclude your Carbon Fast by making a personal pledge to serve God and serve others by pursuing a more sustainable way of life.