



ST. FRANCIS PLEDGE NEWSLETTER

A newsletter from the Care for Creation Task Force

Easter Hope

Last year was the Jubilee Year of Hope and Catholic communities all over the United States hosted Pilgrimages of Hope for Creation. There were at least four here in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Yet, we find that the EPA is facing the supposedly largest deregulatory action in U.S. history. 31 regulations on power plants, oil and gas companies, mandatory greenhouse gas reporting, wastewater, vehicles, particulate matter, and much more are being "reconsidered." And we don't know what these reconsiderations will ultimately result in.

And perhaps some regulations need to be changed. Reassessment is, after all, a responsible course of action for any program or project. But there seems to be a push not just for producing more local energy and lowering the cost of living, but for "driving a dagger straight into the heart of the climate change religion". For us as Catholics, climate change is not a religion, but rather *Caring for Creation* is a core principle of Catholic Social Teaching.

While I don't mind seeking strategies to lower the cost of living for families, what if those strategies go up against what our faith teaches us? Regulations are placed to protect people and ensure a safe world for future generations. Will regulations safe-guarding clean water be taken away? Clean air? Will the nature trails and parks we enjoy become a site for fracking or mining? The health of the community is intertwined with the health of the environment. When the environment is polluted, all are affected.

But despite this grim news, now, more than ever, is there hope. More communities, secular and non-secular, are striving to compost and recycle. Several parish and school communities are looking for ways not just to reduce waste but reduce plastic and find alternatives to Styrofoam and other plastic products. There are Fish Fries striving to be zero-waste, school cafeterias switching to reusable flatware, composting in community gardens, and much more.

So as we enter into this Easter season, in what ways can you and your community take care of each other through God's gift of creation? What do you need to achieve those aspirations and who do you need and can rely on to help? You are not alone, and together, with God, there is nothing we cannot accomplish.

Pace e bene,

Jill Foster and the Archdiocesan Care for Creation Task Force



Laudato Si' Sector Sessions

We are furthering our efforts to care for God's creation in our archdiocese. In its structure, the Laudato Si' Action Platform names seven sectors where unique opportunities for partnership might exist. We are currently supporting networking groups in these areas:

- **Families of parishes**
- **Religious communities**
- **Universities**
- **High Schools**

These sectors have begun meeting and if you are interested in exploring one (or more) of these groups, please contact Jillian Foster. All are welcome!



Celebrating Laudato Si' Communities!

On May 1st, 2025, the Archdiocese celebrated 4 new Laudato Si' Communities at Moeller High School!

Marianist Environmental Education Center (MEEC) at Mount St. John

The Marianist Environmental Education Center (MEEC, <https://meec.center>) cares for 100 acres of natural area of the 147-acre Mount Saint John (MSJ) Campus in Dayton Ohio sponsored by the Society of Mary (Marianist Brothers and priests) and welcomes over 10,000 guests annually. Major renovations for greater sustainability, energy conservation and energy efficiency are implemented under the direction of Mount St. John Facilities and Grounds in the five buildings housing four Marianist ministries and the Novitiate community. All campus lighting was converted to LED, efficient insulation and new windows were installed and recycling, materials reuse, and sustainable goods have all increased.

Two recent major initiatives Respond to the Cry of the Earth. In 2019, 62-acres of land of the Marianist Nature Preserve restored prairie, woods, wetlands, pond and nature trails were placed into a permanent conservation easement. In 2023, a four-acre, 854 kW solar panel array with native prairie planted underneath was constructed that powers the entire campus as net-zero annually. So, new vehicle and equipment purchases are electric. Sustainable Lifestyles are fostered through water refill stations and composting offered throughout campus and MEEC and

Bergamo Center for Lifelong Learning offer guests fair and ethically sourced vegetarian /low meat food options

MEEC invites all to participate in *Restoring Communities of Land and People* in Mary's hope-filled spirit and Pope Francis' vision of Integral Ecology. MEEC engages in *Ecological Education and Ecological Spirituality* with middle school to adults through nature hikes, prayer, native plant labyrinth meditations, and land service experiences. MEEC also offers online and self-guided interpretive guides and programs regionally to nationally including: Native plant education to foster ecosystem biodiversity, climate action. MEEC engages volunteers year-round in hands-on learning and maintains an onsite nursery of over 300 native plants from our bioregion and holds an annual plant sale. MEEC responds to the *Cry of the Poor* and nurtures *Community Resilience and Empowerment* through urban pollinator projects to create healthier greenspaces and many partnerships in Dayton, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and the national Marianist Social Justice Collaborative and Marianist Family Encounters Projects.



ADVOCATE

Farm Bill

The Farm Bill is a massive piece of legislation that supports farms, foreign aid, and food assistance. Parts of the 2018 Farm Bill has been extended once again until September 30, 2026. Please see some new information below on it!

On March 5, 2026, the House Agriculture Committee members voted 34-17 to advance a new farm bill with intention to bring the bill to the full House floor for a vote by Easter. Even having passed in the committee, the bill is still controversial and likely difficult to pass in the full House. One aspect of the bill is protection for pesticide companies from legal claims about pesticides' health impacts.

No amendments to roll back the SNAP cuts were passed. If it passes in the House in Easter, it will move on to the Senate and then need to be signed into law by the President. The Senate has not released a draft.

Please utilize our Farm Bill [web page](#) which has a number of resources to keep yourself informed. Keep reminding our members of Congress how important this bill is and

encourage them to work for increased support for our farmers, our sisters and brothers around the world, and those who are struggling with food insecurity here in our country.



UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF
CATHOLIC BISHOPS

Feel free to use the **Creation Mass** from Pope Leo XIV!

[Holy Mass for the Care of Creation](#)

[USCCB Article](#)

Keep an eye out for current USCCB [Action Alerts](#) here!

Other Advocacy

Keep an eye on these bills:

HB 471 – Fix Our Forests Act – for wildfire prevention and supports environmental work in forests. BUT there is concern about possible permissions for loggers to be more active. It has bipartisan support, but environmental agencies are split. The Catholic Conference has not spoken on it.

HB 303 is the bill for Community Solar which passed in the House and is moving on to the Senate. The Catholic Conference has supported it in the past but the president of the Senate is all for fossil fuels and is making it difficult to allow into the Senate (Rob McColley). [HB 303 Messaging Guidelines - Google Docs](#)

Read up on **The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty**, which is trying to get nations around the world to: stop FF expansion, wind down production of fossil fuels, and ensure equity.



LEARN

COMMUNITY PARTNERS & EVENTS



The Precious Planet Award!

The Congregation of the Sisters of the Precious Blood is inviting all elementary schools in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati to participate in the Precious Planet Award, a special initiative as part of the school's science fair. Inspired by Pope Francis' *Laudato Si* and *Laudate Deum*, this award promotes environmental stewardship among students in grades 7-8. Winners in the 8th grade will receive a \$500 scholarship, and all participants will be awarded certificates and medals.

Don't miss this scholarship opportunity. Contact *Jen Morin-Williamson, Peace, Justice and Ecology Coordinator for the Sisters of the Precious Blood*. jmorin-williamson@cppsadmin.org or 937-837-3302 x 116



FAITH COMMUNITIES GO GREEN

Greater Cincinnati Green Team Gathering (in person)

Saturday, April 11, 2 - 4 PM Eastern

Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church

[103 William Howard Taft Rd, Cincinnati, OH 45219](#)

Please [REGISTER HERE](#)

Guest Speakers: Cincinnati Councilwoman Meeka Owens,
and Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Green Team Leader, John Talmadge

Greater Cincinnati Earth Day Festival

Sunday, April 19, 12-5 pm

Washington Park, [1230 Elm St Cincinnati, OH 45202](#)

Live Music, Green Career Fair, and myriad environmental exhibits

You can [view past webinars here.](#)



Wildflower and Bird Walk

Saturday, April 18th starting at 9:00 AM

Location to be finalized.

More information at www.bellarminechapel.org

**Find presentations and learn more about [Embracing God's Creation](#) at
Bellarmine Chapel!**



[Marianist Environmental Education Center](#)

Check out their [Calendar of Events here!](#)

[Walking in Beauty: A spring inspiration retreat](#)

Saturday, April 11, 2026 - 9:00am to 4:00pm

[Land Service Volunteer Day - April](#)

Saturday, April 11, 2026 - 1:00pm to 4:00pm

[Wild Church - April](#)

Saturday, April 18, 2026 - 10:00am to 12:00pm

[Day of Dialogue with Dan Horan](#)

Saturday, April 25, 2026 - 9:00am to 5:00pm



MORE PARTNERS & EVENTS

[EarthConnection](#)

[“Untangling Plastics: The Missing Link in Mitigating Climate Change”](#)

Webinar with local author Bob Gedert

Thursday, April 23rd, 1:00 PM and 7:00 PM

Go to www.scearthconnection.org for the zoom information.

[Find information on events here.](#) View their catalogue of [past webinars.](#)

[Embracing God's Creation](#) at Bellarmine Chapel

Faith Communities Go Green

Marianist Environmental Education Center

Partners for the Environment

Sisters of Earth

Sisters of Earth meeting

July 30-August 2

It will start Thursday evening with supper at 5:00 PM and end with lunch at noon on Sunday.

Cost is \$200 for those who will be boarding at Mt. St. Joseph University and \$120 for commuters.

Contact Sr. Cj at cjwilliengo@gmail.com.

Stella Maris Family of Parishes

Healing the Soil by Composting

St. Peter, Stella Maris Family of Parishes

Thursday, April 16, 7:00pm

For those that understand that "Soil is a caress of God" - Laudato Si (#84)
Elea Cooper from Clermont County Soil and Water will be giving a talk on composting.
Learn how to work with nature to produce a rich soil that will bring a bountiful harvest.
Come join the Caring for God's Creation Committee of Stella Maris at this ground breaking event.

B-W Greenway Community Land Trust

B-W Greenway is dedicated to the preservation and restoration of wetlands and woodlands in Dayton.



ACT

Eco-Tips

Shared by Susan Vogt and FCGG

April: DO A "GREEN SABBATH"

1. EASY: Take a weekly day of rest. Take a walk, eat with friends, play with your kids, sing, meditate. Maybe you already do this but be intentional about renewing your spirit. [Read about Green Sabbath Project.](#)
2. CHALLENGING: Maybe you already do the above but be intentional about renewing your spirit without manual or head work. Don't shop, clean, or build. Curtail driving if possible.

May: FOOD

1. EASY: Support a local bakery/butcher you like and bring your own reusable packaging.
2. CHALLENGING: Bake from "scratch" when possible, using natural ingredients (fruits, vegetables, etc.) Avoid overly processed food.

June: REDUCE DISPOSABLES & BEYOND

1. EASY: Reduce use of aluminum foil. Manufacturing aluminum takes a lot of electricity. Use a reusable container when possible.
2. CHALLENGING: Invest in cloth napkins for daily use instead of disposable paper napkins and towels.



Laudate Deum Action Pledge

In honor of the Pope's new exhortation, the [Catholic Climate Covenant](#) has created a new way to pledge action and commitment.

In *Laudate Deum*, Pope Francis calls "all people of good will" to take action on the climate crisis and "*move beyond the mentality of appearing to be concerned but not having the courage needed to produce substantial changes.*" (LD 56) He particularly calls on us in the United States to make personal changes to our consumerist

lifestyles, reduce our fossil fuel use, and to also advocate for systemic actions to address the climate crisis.

Together we can courageously commit to specific actions that will produce a much needed culture shift and produce a better future for our common home.

Take the Pledge



PRAY

April

Bulletin Prayer

God of all creation, help us to carry in our hearts and in our actions the miracle of this Easter season. May we be faithful followers of Jesus who walked this Earth to show us how God loves us and how we are called to love one another. May we challenge ourselves daily to reach out to those who are suffering and in need and with our own lives bring more light into the world.

Intercession

That our lives may be beacons of light and hope in our world today; that our thoughts and actions may daily flow from the love you have placed in our hearts.

Papal Quote

“At Easter, God finally reveals His glory: He takes away the last veil and astonishes us as never before. We discover, in fact, that God’s glory is all love: pure love, mad and unthinkable, beyond every limit and measure...True glory is the glory of love, because it is the only one that gives life to the world.”

Pope Francis

May

Bulletin Prayer

God of the Universe, give us eyes to see the beauty in all creation and the courage to live lives that show forth dignity and respect for all. Give us eyes to see injustices and the courage to work for solutions. Fill our hearts with love and compassion.

Intercession

Teach us to open our hearts to your light and love that we may be peacemakers in our society and in our world.

Papal Quote

“Religious experience is an essential dimension of the human person. Without it, it is difficult, if not impossible, to bring about the purification of the heart necessary for building peaceful relationships.”

Pope Leo XIV

June

Bulletin Prayer

God of the Universe, you who have created us out of love and call us to be symbols of that love in our world, give us the strength and courage to confront injustices without anger, but with open hearts and hands that reach out to connect with others that together we might build your kingdom on Earth.

Intercession

Grant us the grace to acknowledge where we have failed and the courage to learn to work together with others that we may be faithful disciples and help to bring about your kingdom on Earth.

Papal Quote

“Evangelical justice does not turn away from human justice but questions and reshapes it, challenging it to always go further, because it impels it toward reconciliation.”

Pope Leo XIV



ASSESS

Resources

[Laudato Si & Laudate Deum](#)

[USCCB on Care for Creation](#)

[Laudato Si' Action Platform](#)

[CRS on Climate Change](#)

[U.S. LSAP website - God's Planet](#)

[Caritas et Veritate \(Pope Benedict XIII, #48-](#)

[Catholic Climate Covenant](#)

[52\)](#)



— ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI —
**CATHOLIC SOCIAL
ACTION OFFICE**

Catholic Social Action Office | 100 East Eighth Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Sent to: amusgrave@catholicaoc.org

[Unsubscribe](#)

Archdiocese of Cincinnati, 100 E 8th St, Cincinnati, OH 45202, United States