

SALT & LIGHT

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PROTECTING MOTHER EARTH

We all know that weather and climate are different but related; weather is extremely variable while climate is the general weather patterns over a long period of time. So a heat wave no more proves that the earth is warming than 3 feet of snow disproves it. But when we experience one record setting year after another, that means the climate has changed; the prevailing weather patterns are different. That is the world we live in today.

Last week climate advocates gathered in Rome for a conference marking the 3rd anniversary of Laudato Si'. Cardinal Pietro Parolin gave opening remarks that spoke ominously of a threat to our very existence: "We all know how precarious is the situation of our planet today. The encyclical is indeed a timely response to one of the most urgent challenges faced by humanity today, namely, a possible collapse of the very home that sustains us and all forms of life."

<https://zenit.org/articles/cardinal-parolin-addresses-international-conference-saving-our-common-home-and-the-future-of-life-on-earth-full-text/>

In his remarks, however, Pope Francis quoted the encyclical to call us back to hope and asked that we emulate St. Francis' mission to repair God's house: "...human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start" (Laudato Si', 54).

"Here we can think back on the call that Francis of Assisi received from the Lord in the little church of San Damiano: "Go and repair my house, which, as you can see, lies in ruins". Today, the "common home" of our planet also needs urgently to be repaired and secured for a sustainable future." http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/july/documents/papa-francesco_20180706_terzoanniversario-laudatosi.html

The Catholic Climate Covenant has invited our parishes and other Catholic institutions to sign the Catholic Climate Declaration, affirming the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement and calling on our government to uphold its principles. Locally, 3 parishes have already signed on: the Cathedral Community, Transfiguration in Pittsford and St. Marianne Cope in Henrietta. Please consider adding your name to the list. To learn more, go to <http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/catholic-climate-declaration>

RECYCLING

In addition to concern for our changing climate, Laudato Si' warns that we are turning our earth into a "giant garbage dump", encouraging less materialistic ways of living and reducing waste by buying fewer things, then reusing and recycling what we must use. Unfortunately just as recycling has become second nature to many Americans, our dependence on foreign markets has created a challenge. It turns out that China was our main market for recyclables and they are accepting fewer materials for processing. So what can we do to make sure we are producing as little waste as possible?

1. Either compost at home or arrange for a service that picks up food scraps and returns usable compost. See <https://www.communitycomposting.org/>
2. Purchase second hand items when you can.
3. Use reusable shopping bags.
4. Decline plastic straws when offered and request that vendors not use them: thelastplasticstraw.org/
5. Know the recycling rules for your trash service. Contaminating recyclables with nonrecyclable materials can result in usable materials being thrown away. Although rules vary among carriers, most use Monroe County's Recycling Center, so you can check there for details: <https://www2.monroecounty.gov/desktop-residentialrecycling.php>
6. Recycle plastic bags at retail stores that collect them. They take many kinds of clean, dry plastic bags and film including
 - Retail, carryout, produce, newspaper, bread, and dry cleaning bags (clean, dry and free of receipts and clothes hangers)
 - Zip-top food storage bags (clean and dry)
 - Plastic shipping envelopes (remove labels), bubble wrap and air pillows (deflate)
 - Product wrap on cases of water/soda bottles, paper towels, napkins, disposable cups, bathroom tissue, diapers, and female sanitary products
 - Furniture and electronic wrap
 - Plastic cereal box liners (**but** if it tears like paper, **do not include**)
 - Any film packaging or bag that has the How2Recycle label

CLIMATE ACTION

Now is the time to start planning for a fall event that engages your parish in climate awareness. Four overlapping events provide a good framework for action.

1. September 1, World Day of Prayer for Creation. Learn more and find resources at <https://catholicclimatemovement.global/world-day-of-prayer/>
2. September 8, Rise for Climate, Jobs and Justice. <https://350.org/press-release/rise-for-climate-september-8th/>. Scheduled to precede the Global Climate Action Summit which begins on Sept 12 in San Francisco, this event is intended to send the message that strong action on climate change is needed. Locally the Rochester People's Climate Coalition is planning a forum to educate community leaders of the impact of climate change on the people who live here. A faith group might consider planning an inter-faith service or pilgrimage.
3. The Season of Creation begins on September 1, the World Day of Prayer for Creation, and ends on October 4, the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi. An ecumenical movement, this year's theme is "Walking Together". Learn more and find resources at <https://seasonofcreation.org/>
4. October 4, the Feast of St. Francis. In the Catholic tradition, this event focuses on pet blessings, reminding us of the importance of the creatures who share our earth. The Catholic Climate Covenant offers materials to help parishes celebrate this year's theme, "Who is My Neighbor in a Climate-threatened World"? Find resources at <http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/FOSF>

GRANTS FOR HEATING SYSTEMS

Want to reduce your carbon footprint but solar doesn't make sense for you? New York State is offering grants to encourage the installation of ground source heat pumps. Individuals, businesses and non-profits, including churches are eligible for these funds. According to NYSEDA, "Renewable heating and cooling technologies such as ground source heat pumps not only provide environmental benefits but also provide energy bill savings, increased comfort levels and health benefits compared to conventional heating and cooling technologies.... The technology replaces oil- and gas-fired heating and cooling sources, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions"

Rebates go through approved installers. Learn more at <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/All-Programs/Programs/Ground-Source-Heat-Pump-Rebate>

PRESERVATION FORUM

All are invited to "A Forum on Preserving Parkland in Rush" with a presentation on the Importance of Pollinators by Ashley Fersch from Cornell University. Q&A to follow.

Tuesday July 10, 6:30 - 8:00 PM

Rush Methodist Church, 6200 Rush-Lima Road, Rush, NY 14543

SUPPORT ETHICAL TRADE

One of the best ways to promote a more just world is to make as many purchases as possible fair trade. Fair trade allows people to thrive in their homelands, reducing the need to migrate. It uses resources more sustainably and respects the dignity of work and the workers. Catholic Relief Service's Ethical Trade program gives individuals and parishes the resources for shopping ethically. Learn more at <https://ethicaltrade.crs.org/>

SPEAKER OPPORTUNITY

A young local woman, Pendle Marshall-Hallmark, who has been living and working in Colombia for the past year and a half with Fellowship of Reconciliation Peace Presence (FORPP), is interested in giving brief (1-2 hour long) presentation/discussion to any groups that are interested in learning about the Colombian peace process and the ways that activists in the United States can support activists in Colombia. Although she is open to passing the hat for donations, her primary goal is to educate as many as possible about the reality in Colombia. She is available from July 18—August 18. Contact Pendle at pendlemh@gmail.com

If you would like to hear Pendle speak but aren't prepared to set up a forum, the Rochester Committee on Latin America (ROCLA) is holding a special session on Wednesday, July 25 at 7:30 PM at the home of Gail and Peter Mott, 288 Melrose St., Rochester. Please RSVP to Peter and Gail, interconnect_mott@frontiernet.net

"In my Message for the 2018 World Day of Migrants and Refugees, I suggested that our pastoral response to the challenges of contemporary movements of migration can be expressed by four verbs: to welcome, to protect, to promote and to integrate. Welcoming means expanding legal and secure programs of reception for those who arrive, as well as offering suitable and dignified accommodations that guarantee their personal safety and access to basic services. Protecting involves offering trustworthy and verified information to migrants and refugees prior to their departure, defending their basic rights independent of their legal status, and watching over the most vulnerable, the young children."

-Pope Francis, 9/22/17