



# Ecological Stewardship

*Leave the world a better place  
for future generations.*



## *Stewardship as a Way of Life* *Resource Kit for Ecological Stewardship*

This resource kit can be utilized in any setting, whether you are a couple, a family with children, a small group or an individual. The directions are below.

1. Begin by praying the Stewardship Prayer in this packet;
2. Read the definition, summary statement and key messages that explain the theme for the month;
3. Choose one scripture reading that is suggested, read it and talk about it or reflect upon it;
4. Use the reflection questions to see how you can live out this theme during the next two months/year ahead;
5. Decide on a plan of action together and maybe use several of the resources suggested within this packet to help increase your understanding of *Ecological Stewardship*;
6. Use the prayer intentions and one of the closing prayers to end your session.

## **PRAYER FOR ECOLOGICAL STEWARDSHIP**

### ***Mother Earth***

*Dear mother earth, who day by day  
Unfolds rich blessing on our way,  
O praise God! Alleluia!  
The fruits and flowers that verdant grow,  
Let them his praise abundant show.  
O praise God, O praise God,  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia  
--- St. Francis of Assisi*

**\*\*Note:** *In 1979, Pope John Paul II proclaimed Saint Francis of Assisi the Patron of those who promote ecology. He said that St. Francis “offers Christians an example of genuine and deep respect for the integrity of creation... May he remind us of our serious obligation to respect and watch over [creation] with care...”*



## **CLOSING PRAYER**

### **The St. Francis Pledge**

I/We Pledge to:

- **PRAY** and reflect on the duty to care for God’s Creation and protect the poor and vulnerable.
- **LEARN** about and educate others on the causes and moral dimensions of climate change.
- **ASSESS** how we-as individuals and in our families, parishes and other affiliations-contribute to climate change by our own energy use, consumption, waste, etc.
- **ACT** to change our choices and behaviors to reduce the ways we contribute to climate change.
- **ADVOCATE** for Catholic principles and priorities in climate change discussions and decisions, especially as they impact those who are poor and vulnerable.

Find the St. Francis Pledge and other actions on the website for Catholic Climate Covenant: <http://catholicclimatecovenant.org/>

## ***PRAYER INTENTIONS***

*(Please respond: Lord, hear our prayer.)*

For inspiring, positive and fun experiences in our spring and summer outdoor, recreational pursuits especially locally.... *We pray to the Lord*

That as a faith community we deepen our understanding of how ecological stewardship fits into our spiritual responsibilities.... *We pray to the Lord*

For shared vision of our role in the ecological system.... *We pray to the Lord*

For the equal and just distribution of our world's natural resources and a commitment to sustainable use.... *We pray to the Lord*

For future generations that they may enjoy a healthful environment that reflects the goodness and beauty of the Creator. ...*We pray to the Lord.*

For social justice for the poor and vulnerable who suffer disproportionately from environmental destruction.... *We pray to the Lord.*

## ***STEWARDSHIP AS A WAY OF LIFE*** ***Ecological Stewardship***

**Definition:** “*Ecological Stewardship*” – Leave the world a better place for future generations.

**Summary Statement:** "To commit oneself to the promotion of a sound and healthy environment for all is to follow God’s plan for creation, a plan entrusted to us from the beginning." Sr. Marjorie Keenan, RSHM

### **Key Messages:**

1. **Growing in Care of the Earth**—Creation, like the bread of hospitality offered by our ancestors of faith, is a gift. As we welcome another creature, we welcome a part of ourselves. When we care for any body in creation, we care for ourselves, too. We are so intimately connected that whatever happens to any member of the body happens to the whole body. The world in all its diversity and life forms is a gift from God. Care for creation is the action of a grateful heart. When we meditate and pray to grow in care of the earth, when we take care of Brother Wind, Sister Water, Mother Earth, as Francis of Assisi calls them, we build the Reign of God.
2. **Image of God**—“In this community of all creation each species has its own unique place. Every creature bears the “stamp of origin” of the creator, the one primordial ground of all being. Every type of creature, then, must be understood as reflecting something of the mystery of the creator. Humankind is part of a world of beings which are all related to one another as one community grounded in the life of God.” – Denis Edwards

***IF YOU WANT TO CULTIVATE PEACE,  
PROTECT CREATION***

Message of his holiness Pope Benedict XVI  
**World Day of Peace** January 1, 2010

At the beginning of this New Year, I wish to offer heartfelt greetings of peace to all Christian communities, international leaders, and people of good will throughout the world. For this XLIII World Day of Peace I have chosen the theme: If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation.

Respect for creation is of immense consequence, not least because “creation is the beginning and the foundation of all God’s works”, and its preservation has now become essential for the pacific coexistence of mankind. Man’s inhumanity to man has given rise to numerous threats to peace and to authentic and integral human development – wars, international and regional conflicts, acts of terrorism, and violations of human rights.

Yet no less troubling are the threats arising from the neglect – if not downright misuse – of the earth and the natural goods that God has given us. For this reason, it is imperative that mankind renew and strengthen “that covenant between human beings and the environment, which should mirror the creative love of God, from whom we come and towards whom we are journeying”... The environment must be seen as God’s gift to all people, and the use we make of it entails a shared responsibility for all humanity, especially the poor and future generations.

***EARTH DAY EVENTS  
As Christ has risen, so has SPRING!  
April 17-18, 2010***

**Minneapolis Earth Day Clean Up**

Saturday April 17, 9:30am-12:00pm

See [www.minneapolisparcs.org](http://www.minneapolisparcs.org) for clean up sites and help keep Minneapolis beautiful!

**NE Mpls River 5K Run/Walk & Watershed Clean Up**

Saturday, April 17, Gluek Park

Visit [www.bottineaneighborhood.org/earthday10.html](http://www.bottineaneighborhood.org/earthday10.html) or call 612.782.2145 for details.

**Earth Day at the Midtown Global Market**

Saturday, April 17, 1:00-4:00pm

[midtownglobalmarket.org/?q=2010EarthDay](http://midtownglobalmarket.org/?q=2010EarthDay)

**EarthFest: A Party for the Planet at the Minnesota Zoo**

Saturday and Sunday, April 17 and 18

[www.mnzoo.org/events/events\\_earthFest\\_2010.asp](http://www.mnzoo.org/events/events_earthFest_2010.asp)

**Minneapolis Recycle Run 5K at Lake Harriet**

Sunday, April 18

Go to [www.minneapolisparcs.org](http://www.minneapolisparcs.org) for more information.

**Como Zoo 2-Day Conservation Event**

Saturday and Sunday, April 24 and 25

[www.comozooconservatory.org/como\\_zoo/events.shtml](http://www.comozooconservatory.org/como_zoo/events.shtml)

**Wishes for the Sky, Harriet Island**

Sunday, April 25, 11:00am-5:00pm [www.wishesforthesky.org](http://www.wishesforthesky.org)

**Basilica Gardening and Grounds Volunteering**

Volunteers assist in lawn care and lawn mowing along with special projects such as planting. Contact Susan 612.317.3406.

## ***EVENTS FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS***

### **Ecological Stewardship Reflection**

Sunday, April 11, 11:00am-12:15pm, St. Ambrose/Teresa  
Join Bernie Evans, Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology at St. John's University.

### **Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Fair**

Sunday, April 11, 10:30am-1:30pm, Teresa of Calcutta Hall  
Learn about CSA and Land Stewardship Project from Farmer Dan..

### **Why do Catholics have to care about the environment?**

Sunday, April 11, 7:30pm, Sunday Night Live at Joe's Garage

### **"Hope in a Changing Climate"**

Sunday, April 18, 11:00-11:45am, Teresa of Calcutta Hall  
Watch the film and participate in discussion afterward.

### **Blessing of the Bicycles**

Sunday, May 2, 11:00am-1:30pm, Basilica Plaza  
Join us for the blessing followed by 1:45pm bike ride.

### **Living Green Expo at the MN State Fair Grand Stand**

Saturday and Sunday, May 1 and 2  
[www.livinggreen.org/gettingthere.cfm](http://www.livinggreen.org/gettingthere.cfm)

### **St John's Arboretum Annual Plant Sale**

Saturday, May 8, 8:30am-12:00pm [www1.csbsju.edu/arboretum/default.htm](http://www1.csbsju.edu/arboretum/default.htm)

### **The Renegade Gardener**

Thursday, May 13, 6:00pm  
Join Crossroads for Mass in St. Joseph Chapel, followed by potluck dinner in the Teresa of Calcutta Hall with guest speaker Master Gardener Don Engebretson. Contact Marilyn 763.541.9393.

### **Walk or Mow the Mary Labyrinth**

The Basilica of Saint Mary's labyrinth begins at the of the Mary Garden, and is dedicated to Mary, the mother of Jesus. Help mow the labyrinth this summer, or simply come and visit!

I also observed that whenever nature, and human beings in particular, are seen merely as products of chance or an evolutionary determinism, our overall sense of responsibility wanes. On the other hand, seeing creation as God's gift to humanity helps us understand our vocation and worth as human beings. With the Psalmist, we can exclaim with wonder: "When I look at your heavens, the work of your hands, the moon and the stars which you have established; what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?" (Ps 8:4-5). Contemplating the beauty of creation inspires us to recognize the love of the Creator, that Love which "moves the sun and the other stars".

### **For more visit:**

[www.mary.org/ecologicalstewardship](http://www.mary.org/ecologicalstewardship)



## *Suggested Scriptures*

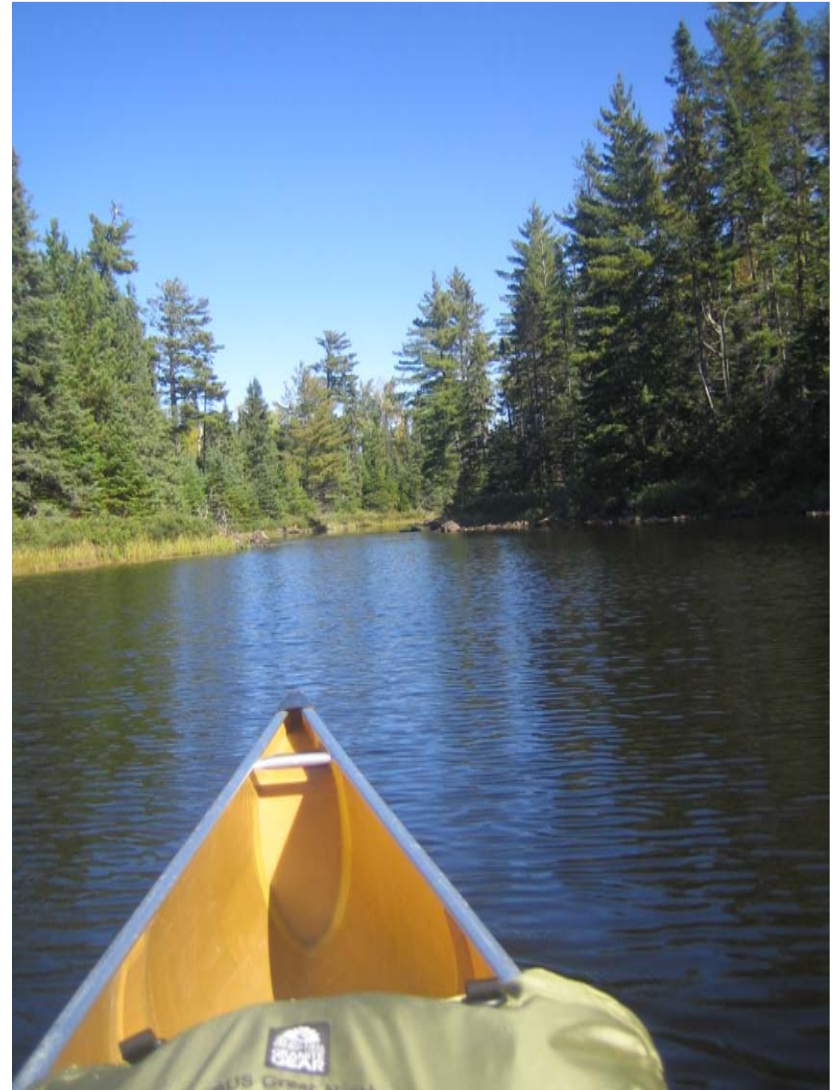
**Genesis 1:26-29.** *Then God said: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the cattle, and over all the wild animals, and all the creatures that crawl on the ground. God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them, saying: “Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth.” God also said: “See, I give you every seed-bearing plant all over the earth and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food....”*

**Genesis 2:15.** *The Lord God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it.*

**Wisdom 7:17-22.** *For he gave me sound knowledge of existing things, that I might know the organization of the universe and the force of its elements, the beginning and the end and the midpoint of times, the changes in the sun’s course and the variations of the seasons. Cycles of years, positions of the stars, natures of animals, tempers of beasts, Powers of the winds and thoughts of men, uses of plants and virtues of roots—Such things as are hidden I learned, and such as are plain; for Wisdom, the artificer of all, taught me.*

**Wisdom 9:1-3.** *God of my fathers, Lord of mercy, you who have made all things by your word, and in your wisdom have established man to rule the creatures produced by you, to govern the world in holiness and justice, and to render judgment in integrity of heart.*

**Isaiah 35:1-2.** *The desert and the parched land will exult; the steppe will rejoice and bloom. They will bloom with abundant flowers, and rejoice with joyful song. The glory of Lebanon will be given to them, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God.*





## **RESOURCES FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION**

### **Taizé Prayer and Opportunity for Individual Confession**

Tuesday, May 11 at 5:30pm

This service is characterized by mantra-like singing of simple, yet beautiful songs, following the Taizé community tradition of communal prayer focused on reconciliation and healing.

### **Peace with God—Peace with One Another**

Sunday evenings, 8:30—9:00pm

April 11—May 23

The Basilica of St. Mary is hosting an ecumenical Night Prayer service each Sunday evening of the Easter season.

### **Contemplative Prayer**

Wednesdays, 7:30am, St. Joseph Chapel

Basilica parishioners and friends meet for contemplative prayer Wednesday mornings immediately following 7:00am Mass.

### **Morning Prayer**

Every Thursday morning, 9:15—9:35am, Saint Joseph Chapel

Morning prayer consists of the singing of a hymn and Psalms, proclamation of the word of God, and prayers for the Church and the world.

**Matthew 6:25-26.** *Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not more important than they?*

**Luke 12:27-28.** *Notice how the flowers grow. They do not toil or spin. But I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of them. If God so clothes the grass in the field that grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith?"*

## **Other Writings**

### **US Catholic Bishops' Statement—Care for God's Creation**

*"We show our respect for the creator by our stewardship of creation."*

Good stewardship of the earth and of all its creatures (including human beings) is a complex challenge. Humans are part of creation itself, and whatever we do to the earth we ultimately do to ourselves. We must live in harmony with the rest of creation and preserve it for future generations. *"At its core, the environmental crisis is a moral challenge. It calls us to examine how we use and share the goods of the earth, what we pass on to future generations, and how we live in harmony with God's creation."*

### **Pope John Paul II—On social concern**

*"The dominion granted to man by the creator is not an absolute power, nor can one speak of a freedom to 'use and misuse', or to dispose of things as one pleases. The limitation imposed from the beginning by the creator himself...shows clearly enough that, when it comes to the natural world, we are subject not only to biological laws but also to moral ones, which cannot be violated with impunity."*

## ***DID YOU KNOW . . . .***

- ⇒ A 2% drop in body water can cause short-term memory loss
- ⇒ About 9 gallons of water are required to produce 1 gallon of gasoline
- ⇒ 1 gallon of gasoline can pollute 750,000 gallons of water
- ⇒ Every ton of paper that is recycled saves 17 trees
- ⇒ Each person throws away approximately four pounds of garbage every day
- ⇒ 1/3 of all energy is used by people at home
- ⇒ 5 million tons of oil produced in the world each year ends up in the ocean
- ⇒ It takes 90% less energy to recycle aluminum cans than to make new ones
- ⇒ 14 billion pounds of trash is dumped into the ocean every year
- ⇒ We each use about 12,000 gallons of water every year
- ⇒ The energy we save when we recycle one glass bottle is enough to light a traditional light bulb for four hours

## ***Web Resources***

- **The Catholic Coalition on Climate Change** [catholicclimatecovenant.org/](http://catholicclimatecovenant.org/)
- **Catholic Conservation Center** [www.conservation.catholic.org](http://www.conservation.catholic.org)
- **A Network for Grateful Living** [www.gratefulness.org](http://www.gratefulness.org)—A worldwide community dedicated to gratefulness as the core inspiration for personal change, international cooperation, and sustainable activism in areas of universal concern.
- **MN Energy Challenge** [www.mnenergychallenge.org](http://www.mnenergychallenge.org)—Get great ideas on ways to save money, cut pollution, and fight Global Warming. Pledge to take simple energy saving actions!
- **Congregations Caring for Creation** [www.c3mn.net](http://www.c3mn.net)—The mission of our network, *Congregations Caring for Creation*, is to promote the active care of creation as integral to spiritual life and social justice in Minnesota communities of faith.
- **Minnesota Pollution Control Agency** [www.pca.state.mn.us/](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/)

## ***Videos***

- “Hope for a Renewed Earth” A 60-minute video that reviews major environmental concerns from a Catholic perspective produced by the Catholic Telecommunications Network of America.
- “The Earth is the Lord’s” United States Catholic Conference, 1995. This video calls us to be accountable for what we do, or fail to do, to respect, preserve, and care for God’s presence in human life and all creation.
- **Planet Earth**: 11 part series produced by the Discovery Channel and BBC—request it at your local library or from Netflix.

## **RESOURCES FOR DEEPER UNDERSTANDING**

### **Book Resources**

#### **Leaves of Prayer - Scriptural Passages and Catholic Reflections For Those Who Enjoy Nature**, by Anthony R.

Brach. The twenty chapters offer prayerful, optimistic meditations and images for reflecting upon God's creation.

#### **From Stockholm to Johannesburg: A Historical Overview of the Concern of the Holy See for the Environment, 1972-2002**, by Marjorie Keenan.

A summary of Catholic Teaching on the environment from 1972-2002.

#### **Ecology and Faith: The Writings of Pope John Paul II**,

edited by Sister Ancilla Dent. Pope John Paul II provided us with many truthful and inspiring writings about ecology and faith. This wonderful little book provides many of the Holy Father's best pieces.

**Simple Living: The Path to Joy and Freedom**, by Sister Jose Hobday. Hobday, a Native American and a Franciscan Sister, describes a "program for simple living" focused on six areas of life in which material desires crowd out spiritual life: food, clothing, shelter, work, transportation and recreation.

**Growing in Care for the Earth**, by V. Pharr and J. Watson.

### **Articles**

*Christianity and The Survival of Creation*, by Wendell Berry

[\*The Bible on Environmental Conservation: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Prescription\*](#), by William T. Johnson, Arizona State University, USA, in the Electronic Green Journal, issue 12.

## **TOP 10 REASONS TO CARE FOR CREATION**

1. God is the Creator of the Universe and maintains its existence through an ongoing creative will.
2. God has blessed and called "very good" all that is created.
3. God's plan for Creation is one of harmony and order. Creation forms a whole, a cosmos.
4. God loves the community of life.
5. God's creatures share a common home.
6. God's presence is discernable in all Creation.
7. God intends the Earth's goods to be equitably shared.
8. Within Creation, the human person enjoys a consummate dignity. Inherent to this dignity is that of exercising a wise and just stewardship over the rest of Creation.
9. Sin brought division into the entire world, but not only within and between human persons. The consequences of sin also affect the Earth.
10. In a mysterious way, Christ's redemptive mission extends to all of Creation.

## ***QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION***

Ask yourself or companions these questions on the ride home, gathered around the table or in your small group.

1. When you think about Jesus' lifestyle and the gospel readings, what impression do you have of his practices?
2. What memories do you have of experiencing the natural world? What senses did it arouse?
3. What ways do you currently practice caring for God's creation?
4. Is there additional action you can take to protect creation?
5. What new practices would you like to include?



## ***EXPERIENCES FOR DEEPER UNDERSTANDING***

These suggestions may be experienced individually, with a partner, family or group. Although you may have already experienced these, go again, go in with the intention of stewardship for God's creation.

- Walk through the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden walk. Minneapolis, Theodore Wirth Park.
- Visit the Science Museum of Minnesota in downtown St. Paul. [www.smm.org](http://www.smm.org)
- Meditate while walking the Basilica of St. Mary labyrinth.
- Visit St. John's Arboretum [www.csbsju.edu/arboretum](http://www.csbsju.edu/arboretum)
- Volunteer at a CSA (community supported agriculture) farm for a day [www.landstewardshipproject.org/csa.html](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/csa.html)
- Community Supported Agriculture: Buy and Eat local all season! [www.landstewardshipproject.org/csa.html](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/csa.html) [www.localharvest.org/](http://www.localharvest.org/)
- Visit and walk the trails at Fort Snelling Park. Minneapolis.
- Ride your bike to church (Blessing of the Bicycles on May 2)
- Take the recycling quiz at [www.handsontwincities.org/AboutUs/index.php/special\\_events/rethinkrecycling/001.html](http://www.handsontwincities.org/AboutUs/index.php/special_events/rethinkrecycling/001.html)