



Marianist
Environmental
Education
Center

Restoring communities of land and people

MEEC is a Marianist environmental education community in the Catholic tradition. In Mary's hope-filled spirit, we preserve and act in communion with the land and educate other communities in sustainability through ecology-based simple living, social justice and spirituality.

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ENERGY FAST

*A Lenten resource for reflecting
on climate justice and acting to
conserve energy*

Marianist Environmental Education Center

Lent 2010

Christ has come to lift up all things to himself, to restore unity to creation. (Roman Missal, preface to Christmas II)

Jesus said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life." Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for you to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit your very self? (Luke 9:22-25 TNIV)

Introduction

Each Lent offers us an invitation to be restored in living right relationships – with our God, our neighbor; indeed with all of creation. This requires a discipline of seeing clearly, assessing honestly, actively educating (ourselves and others), acting courageously and advocating boldly. Our Lenten Scriptures provide vivid examples of the dynamism of Jesus' life, and the balance of prayer, reflection and action that he lived out from finding a quiet place to pray, to proclaiming the good news from the mountain. Like the disciples he invited, we too are called to discipleship in our day and time and to be agents of the healing needed. Becoming an environmental disciple requires coming to understand the issues, to own what is required in response, and then to live out the good news – by doing our part! Traditionally, this journey calls us to move between two opposite aspects – one of conscious self-denial, giving up or letting go; the ending or putting to death what is not of God's will; and the other being the positive movement (*vivification*) – becoming alive through our spirits being transformed and renewed. We are called to journey Lent as a community of disciples – being mindful of how our lives and our choices – how we expend our energy, has an impact on others: from the neighbor in our family household

Become a Friend of MEEC

Friends of MEEC lend their financial support to our mission through annual contributions of \$35 or more for an individual, or \$50 or more for a family. As a Friend, you join us in promoting equitable resource use, restoring native ecosystems, and fostering a sustainable human presence on Earth.

Other benefits include:

- free admission to more than 130 nature centers nationwide who are members of the Association of Nature Center Administrators,
- resource-center privileges, including book, journal and video circulation,
- reduced program fees, and
- invitation to special events for Friends and volunteers.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Yes! I support MEEC's work to restore communities of land and people. Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution of \$_____.

- \$35-\$99 \$15 (low income, senior, student) \$50
(family) \$100-\$249 \$250-\$499 \$500+

I am interested in volunteering. Please contact me.

MEEC will not share your contact information.

substitute these in some of your meals.

37. Place lower wattage bulbs in areas such as hallways not used for reading or other light-intensive tasks.
38. When shopping, choose items with the least amount of packaging and avoid resource-intensive convenience packs.
39. As spring approaches consider planting a deciduous tree to shade the south or west side of your home or to shade your air-conditioning unit to help it run more efficiently. The tree will also remove carbon dioxide from the air as it grows.
40. Check out the EnergyStar.gov website for info on all of the tax credits available for energy-efficiency improvements.

This resource was compiled by Leanne Jablonski FMI, Tara Poling and Joe Janosik, NSM of the Marianist Environmental Education Center. Remember to sign the St. Francis Pledge at catholicsandclimatechange.org. For more resources, visit meec.udayton.edu.

Suggested Readings & Resources

- The Climate Crisis: An Introductory Guide to Climate Change, David Archer & Stefan Rahmstorf, Cambridge University Press, 2010
- The Carbon Buster's Home Energy Handbook: Slowing Climate Change and Saving Money, Godo Stoyke, New Society Publishers, 2007.
- 2010 World Day of Peace Message, Pope Benedict XVI, available at www.vatican.va.
- The Ten Commandments for the Environment, Woodeene Koenig-Bricker, Ave Maria Press, 2009.
- Go Green, Save Green: A Simple guide to saving time, money and God's green earth, Nancy Sleeth, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2009.
- Interfaith Power & Light: interfaithpowerandlight.org
- www.greenfacts.org

or workplace and the neighbor down the street, to our brothers and sisters around the globe and also to the plants and animals of our local and global ecosystems.

As you look with hope toward Easter, when what is broken is healed, think about how you hope to be changed during this journey of Lent. Write a brief prayer for transformation for yourself and those close to you. Lent is also a time to let go of that which is not God's will and to cultivate that which is. What actions can you take this Lent to help heal creation, and what do you need to let go of that is harmful to creation?

The Catholic Climate Covenant: the St. Francis Pledge to Protect Creation and the Poor helps individuals discern these connections. This initiative calls Catholic individuals, groups and institutions to make a serious commitment 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 moral dimensions of climate change; **ASSESS** our participation- as individuals and organizations-in contributing to climate change (i.e. consumption and conservation); **ACT** to change our choices and behaviors contributing to climate change and; **ADVOCATE** Catholic principles and priorities in climate change discussions and decisions, especially as they impact the poor and vulnerable. Learn more and take the pledge at catholicsandclimatechange.org

Week One – Humility

Scripture: Deut 26:4-10, Rom 10:8-13, Luke 4:1-13

Remembering who God is and how God has abundantly blessed us is critical as we begin our Lenten journey. This 'remembering' can occur through acts of gratitude, conversion, solidarity, and repentance. It puts us in our proper place with relation to God, our neighbor, and even with ourselves. This week's readings call us back toward an attitude of humility. This includes remembering that we humans, share much in

common with humus – in that we are made from the earth’s soil.

Deuteronomy tells about God’s liberation of the Israelites from bondage and slavery. God then bestowed upon them a rich land, flowing with milk and honey. Because of the rich blessings God provided for the people, Moses prescribes that they offer the first fruits back to God. This gesture of humility shows the people that it is not them who are ultimately responsible for the harvest, but God.

How do I show gratitude to God for the rich fruits of the earth in my life? Do I make a priority of giving the ‘first fruits’ back to God by striving to protect the integrity of creation as a first priority?

Paul, in his exhortation to the Romans, tells us that all distinctions are transcended for those who confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord. Paul clearly states that “the same Lord is Lord of all” and that the Lord “enriches all who call upon him” (NAB). How far we still have to advance as believers unified in Christ!

How do I act out of unity or solidarity with the poor who are most significantly affected by climate change and environmental degradation around the world? How can I help their needs be heard?

Luke tells us of Jesus’ temptations in the desert: turning stone into bread, power and glory over all the earth, and putting God to the test. The familiar responses are deeply moving: “one does not live by bread alone,” “You shall worship the Lord, your God, and God alone shall you

From the 2010 World Day of Peace Message (Pope Benedict XVI)

“Can we remain indifferent before the problems associated with such realities as climate change? . . . Can we disregard the growing phenomenon of environmental refugees? . . . Can we remain impassive in the face of actual and potential conflicts involving access to natural resources?”

- heating or cooling seasons, as this moves conditioned air outside.
24. Allow dishes to air dry, even in the dishwasher.
 25. Install a low-flow showerhead in your bathroom. This will not only save water, but the substantial energy needed to heat it.
 26. Consider fasting from meat at least one meal each week even after Lent. Vegetable- and grain-based protein requires far less energy than animal protein to produce.
 27. Think seriously about big electricity consumers. Do you really need a second fridge? Do the security lights that come on every night use efficient technology, like CFLs or LEDs? Are computers being left on for long periods when not in use?
 28. Install storm doors at each entrance and exit to your home.
 29. Clean the condenser coils underneath or behind your refrigerator regularly to help it run more efficiently.
 30. Calculate the carbon emissions of your travels at travelmatters.org.
 31. Insulate your duct work that passes through unconditioned spaces with insulating wrap available at home stores.
 32. Screen savers do not save energy. Turn your monitor off when you are away from your computer. Ensure the computer is shut off when not in use for an extended period or overnight.
 33. Clean dryer lint traps after every use and change or clean furnace filters monthly.
 34. Check the temperature settings on your refrigerator and freezer. Settings should be 36-38 degrees and 0-5 degrees for maximum efficiency.
 35. If a replacement car is needed soon, consider purchasing a hybrid. Even better, look for a used hybrid with good battery life remaining.
 36. Sample meat alternatives to reduce the significant environmental impact of meat production. Think about how to regularly

- Unplug these devices, or use a power-strip to cut supply to an array of devices.
9. Keep your car tires properly inflated for better gas mileage.
 10. Reusable cloth shopping bags shopping eliminate waste and the energy required to produce plastic bags.
 11. Wrapping your hot water lines with pipe insulation will prevent much heat loss as water travels from heater to faucet.
 12. Use natural light from windows whenever possible.
 13. Most people in the U.S. consume substantially more animal protein than they require. If you don't already, consider going without meat a few days a week.
 14. Avoid using the rinse/hold setting on your dishwasher whenever possible.
 15. Install a programmable thermostat that will reduce heating or cooling during the hours you are away from home or are asleep.
 16. Dust light fixtures regularly. Clean bulbs and reflectors have greater light efficiency.
 17. If you're in the market for a new appliance, make sure it carries an Energy Star label. Visit EnergyStar.gov for info.
 18. Make sure your attic is well-insulated to prevent heat loss. Take advantage of a 30% federal tax credit to help with cost.
 19. Make sure furniture or drapes do not block heating vents or air returns.
 20. Keep fireplace dampers closed when the fireplace is not in use. Chimneys will exhaust warm air as well as smoke.
 21. Rinse clothes in cold instead of hot or warm water. Standard washing machines use 32-59 gallons of water per cycle, which requires significant energy to heat.
 22. Institute a TV-free night, and plan less energy-intensive activities with friends and family. That means no driving!
 23. Do not run exhaust fans excessively during the

serve,” and “you shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test” (NAB). Yet we clearly find ourselves falling into these same temptations in new ways: thinking we can live on solely the material, putting other things before God and God’s creation, and testing the very limits of God’s creation which nourishes and sustains us all. How little we have learned!

In what ways can I avoid buying into a material and consumer culture that perpetuates harm to the earth? How can I help others see the hubris in a society which disregards the limits of the natural order? How can I be more humbly receptive to God’s self-revelation offered through creation?

Week Two – Covenant

Scripture: *Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18; Psalm 27; Philippians 3:17-4:1; Luke 9:28-36*

During this second week of Lent, we are reminded of the covenant between God and the descendants of Abram and Sara, “To your descendants I give this land.” We know the gift of the land is a gift to all, to sustain us, to be revelation for us and to remind of God’s fidelity and love. It is, however, a gift that is corrupted and threatened by greed and selfishness. Our obligation is to steward the land that belongs to God; it does not belong to us. Paul’s letter clearly calls out the enemies of the cross: “Their god is their stomach. . . Their minds are occupied with earthly things.” When we pollute the land to fulfill our wants, the land groans.

What earthly wants crowd out space in my life for God and life-

From the 2010 World Day of Peace Message (Pope Benedict XVI)

“Man’s inhumanity to man has given rise to numerous threats to peace. . . 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.”

giving relationships? How can I live more simply so that the land flourishes?

The Gospel reading this week is the transfiguration, in which the true nature of Christ is revealed - the Messiah in his full divinity, the fulfillment of the scriptures. The apostles are described as becoming fully awake – able to see Jesus’ glory and to hear the voice of God. In this sense, the apostles were transformed, too. During Lent, we pray to be receptive – to be open to hear the voice of God. But it is not enough to be aware – we have to allow ourselves to be transformed and to help transform others, like the apostles.

How can I open myself to be receptive to the voice of God evident in Creation? Where do I see the Earth groaning, and her children suffering? How can I give voice to the voiceless?

Week Three – Responsibility

Scripture: *Isaiah 55:1-9; Psalm 63: 1-8; 1 Cor 10:1-13; Luke 13:1-9*

In his letter to the community at Corinth, Paul reminds them of the Israelites during the Exodus – blessed with food and drink and shelter and protection as promised to them. However, we know that most never saw the promised land – they “gave up” over the course of the journey and allowed themselves to fall prey to old patterns of behavior. The Gospel reading reminds us that God is patient with us – to a point. We must bear the fruit of our faith in our hearts and

From the 2010 World Day of Peace Message (Pope Benedict XVI)

“The true meaning of God’s original command. . . was not a simple conferral of authority, but rather a summons to responsibility. . . Nature is a gift of the Creator, who . . . enabled humans to draw from it the principles needed to “till it and keep it.” Everything that exists belongs to God, who has entrusted it to (us).

1. Install energy-saving compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) and throw away older incandescent bulbs. CFLs use significantly less power and are available in a variety of colors—from bright white to warm yellow. Special CFLs work in dimmable and outdoor fixtures.
2. Keep track of your vehicle usage during the next week. Using this data, plan ways to reduce and combine trips. This saves time, money, and the environment.
3. Question consumption. Share or borrow instead of purchasing. Buy used instead of new when you can. All these help save the energy and resources that new products would require.
4. Lowering your water heater temperature setting from 140°F to 120°F can reduce energy demand by more than 10 percent. 120°F is hot enough to kill bacteria and is hot enough for most household needs.
5. Check your thermostat—each degree above 68°F adds 3% to your home heating energy needs.
6. Use a lit incense stick or candle to locate air leaks around windows and doors, and seal them with caulk or weather stripping. Sealing older windows with plastic film kits will also substantially reduce winter heat loss. These are available in most hardware stores.
7. If you have an older gas water heater or any electric water heater, consider replacing with a tankless or condensing high-efficiency gas water heater. These units use energy more efficiently, cost less to operate, and have practically no standby losses. Plus, you can take advantage of a 30% federal tax credit this year.
8. Many electronic devices continue to draw power even when they are “off,” including anything with a clock, a remote control, or a “wall wart” plug. In the average US home, 75% of the electricity used to power these devices are consumed when they are not in use.

Week Six (Holy Week) – Community

This week calls us into the journey of ultimate love, expressed in Jesus' offering of himself in faith and trust. Palm Sunday and the services of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil provide rich sources of reflection. Holy Week is also a time to reflect back on the Lenten journey and be grateful for our growth and the insights we have gained. We can also reflect on how we have experienced letting go of that which is not God's will and cultivating that which is. From the Last Supper, to Jesus' plea for companionship in the Garden of Gethsemene to Mary and John at the foot of the cross, we are reminded of the important role of community in supporting our faith and courageous acts of justice.

What has been my greatest blessing or insight this Lent? What do I need to let go of that is harmful to creation? What am I called to cultivate?

What steps do I want to take

to continue to nurture my environmental awareness and actions?

How can I join, help create, build or nurture an environmentally-sensitive, energy-conscious faith community of support?

Energy Fast: 40 Ways in 40 Days

Conserving Energy During Lent and Throughout the Year

These forty ways are tangible steps we can take to make a difference – saving energy and the planet's resources. Fasting is a long tradition of doing without so that our senses are reminded of what is essential. Consider choosing an energy-intensive activity or appliances from which to fast during Lent. Each week, select one or a few of these energy-curbing suggestions as a meaningful reminder of your own consumption. The activities are meant to decrease your energy use in an ongoing way. Implement as you are able during Lent, and continue the new habits beyond Easter!

by our actions to fully realize all God desires for us.

The natural fruits of the Earth are among the many blessings God has given us, and they come with obligations. How can I take specific steps to use fewer resources in gratitude for this blessing? How can I ensure the Earth continues to bless future generations?

Week Four – Reconciliation

Scripture: Josh 5:9a, 10-12; 2 Cor 5:17-21; Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

Reuniting our ways with God's ways is at the heart of this week's scriptures. Many areas of our individual and communal lives require reconciliation. And reconciliation demands much of us. The concept of reconciliation or conversion in Hebrew is expressed by words that signify a literal turning around, nothing less than a full about-face. Collectively, we still need that about-face to reunite our ways with God's ways.

Second Corinthians presents Christ as the great reconciler. As believers reconciled through Christ, we too have been given the ministry of reconciliation. But as our collective consumption and distractedness increase and the inequality between rich and poor grows, how profoundly we need that reconciliation. We need Christ's help to reconcile our ways with the limits of creation. And we need help to do it soon.

How often do I work and pray for the reconciliation of the earth with its established limits? Do I act empowered by my Christian charge as a reconciler and with an urgency matching the challenges?

From the 2010 World Day of Peace Message (Pope Benedict XVI)

(The causes of the recent economic crisis) "can be found in a current self-centered and materialistic way of thinking which fails to acknowledge the limitations inherent in every creature. Today I would like to stress that the same way of thinking also endangers creation."

From Pope Benedict XVI dialogue with the clergy of Bressanone, 2008

“Creation is groaning – we can sense it, we can almost hear it – and it is waiting for human beings who will preserve it in accordance with God. The brutal consumption of creation begins where God is missing.”

The familiar story Luke tells of the Prodigal Son provides a powerful image of reconciling and the rejoicing which follows. The son ‘comes to his senses’ and heads back to his father’s house. He is reconciled by his very return, embraced before even opening his mouth. The conversion required of us is similar, away from our destructive habits and toward an active search for the good of God’s earth and thereby the

good of all people.

How can I be most effective in advocating for comprehensive reconciliation with God’s creation? What might I do to inspire others to follow without even using words? Do I convey to others—with a spirit of hope—God’s own waiting to embrace our conversion?

Week Five – Compassion

Scripture: Isaiah 43: 16-21; Phil 3: 8-14; John 8: 1-11

The power of forgiveness and God transforming our lives is the promise of this week. We are invited to forget past behaviors and shortcomings and courageously believe in new ways and that life can be renewed. In our lives, we often get trapped in old patterns of thinking and acting, or become paralyzed by our guilt and shame. This can prevent our openness to letting go and letting God’s Spirit do the work. God is compassionate love, and one who understands our struggles. In response to God’s compassion, we are invited to show that compassion for our neighbor – as experienced in all parts of God’s creation. One way we can do this is through our environmental actions. By reverencing and caring for the earth, we grow

Lifestyles should be oriented according to the principles of sobriety, temperance, and self-discipline, both at the personal and social levels. People need to escape from the consumer mentality and promote methods of production that respect the created order, as well as satisfying the basic needs of all. This change of lifestyle would be helped by a greater awareness of the interdependence that ties together all the inhabitants of the earth.

*- Bishop Giampaolo Crepaldi,
secretary of the Pontifical Council
for Justice and Peace – Ten
Commandments for the
Environment*

in relationship with nature’s beauty, and through the sacramentality of all God created, we experience God’s revelation to us. This can empower us to restore the balance of ecosystems. Our environmental actions that reduce our use of carbon also bring justice and compassion to our human neighbor by reducing the negative impacts of mountaintop removal, deforestation, air

pollution from smelters, and the many impacts of global warming from droughts to floods.

Creation is a gift from God. For what are you personally grateful in creation? Recall a time when you have felt the presence of God in nature; what did that experience say to you about God?

Where does my being judgmental of myself or others (my lack of compassion) block me and prevent change? What steps can I take to ‘let go’, forgive and courageously trust God’s love and compassion for me?

How can I more consciously be attuned to the suffering of the world, and what environmental actions can I take to express my compassion?