

Suggested Lenten actions to benefit the Earth

Carol Meyer | Jan. 5, 2011 Eco Catholic

Cut down on electricity use:

- a) Turn off lights when not in use.
- b) Unplug things seldom used.
- c) Turn off the TV and radio that are just background noise.
- d) Turn off the computer if you won't be using it for several hours.
- e) Use lower wattage bulbs in places that don't need bright light.
- f) Replace your current light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs that use 75 percent less energy.
- g) Have a day a week of no TV, radio, computer, video games, and other electronics use.

Make earth-beneficial changes in your eating habits:

- a) Eat out less at fast-food restaurants
- b) Eat more organic and locally-grown foods
- c) Eat less or no meat. Eat beans, grains, brown rice, nuts, seeds, tofu and more vegetables and fruits.
- d) Cut back on highly packaged foods and snacks.
- e) Eliminate or decrease consumption of soda, bottled water, and drinks purchased in styrofoam or plastic cups/bottles
- f) Use canvas bags for your groceries and other purchases

Make changes in purchases and consumption:

- a) For a certain time period, decide that you will purchase only what is NECESSARY. Have a buying moratorium.
- b) When you do need something, look for natural alternatives that are biodegradable and don't contain toxic chemicals.
- c) Make purchases at thrift stores when possible.
- d) When you make a purchase, use these guidelines: Is it good for the earth? Do I really need this? Will this have lasting value? Will it complicate my life? Am I willing to give up something to have this? Can I get it used? Will I use it a lot and love it? Can I defer this? Can I get it with less packaging?
- e) Clear out your excess and clutter. Simplify your life and share what you don't need with the poor and needy through a thrift store.
- f) Buy appliances that are energy efficient
- g) Don't take the plastic bags at stores. Bring cloth bag if you need one

Recycle and dispose properly

- a) Use the recycling bin your city provides. Recycle your aluminum and tin cans, plastics, newspapers and other paper. Take your glass to a recycling center.
- b) Collect your hazardous wastes and take them to the Hazardous Waste Disposal.
- c) Take your old computers, monitors, and printers to places, where for a small fee, they will disassemble them and remove the contaminants.

Reduce your energy consumption

- a) Turn your home thermostat down several degrees. Wear several layers of clothes to keep warm. Turn it down even more at night and use more blankets.
- b) Drive and fly less. Carpool. Eliminate unnecessary trips or activities. Walk and bike more. Do several errands at the same time.
- c) Run your dishwasher only when it's full
- d) Wash clothes in cold or warm water
- e) Take brief showers instead of baths; install a low-flow showerhead
- f) Lower the temperature of your hot-water heater to 120 degrees or less. Insulate the hot-water heater.
- g) Put more insulation in your attic; add more caulking and weather-stripping
- h) Get an energy audit for your home and make the energy improvements
- i) Buy appliances that are energy efficient

Work for the earth in the wider sphere

- a) Join local or national environmental groups
- b) Give donations to not-for-profit groups that protect the environment
- c) Support legislation that protects the earth
- d) Initiate and support energy-saving measures at your workplace
- e) Become informed through books, DVDs, web sites and other means
- f) Be an advocate for the Earth in your congregation
- g) Pray regularly for the welfare of the planet, its people and all life forms
- h) Do your part to educate people, formally or informally; lead by example

Make creation a larger part of your spirituality

- a) Learn about creation and its wonders and give thanks to God
- b) Spend time in nature and learn about God from it
- c) Meditate on your connection to everyone and everything
- d) Stop and appreciate the sacred in all things
- e) Read books and watch DVDs on creation spirituality

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