



**Catholic Climate Covenant**<sup>sm</sup>  
Care for Creation. Care for the Poor.

# EARTH DAY 2020

**REVISED PARTICIPANT PROGRAM GUIDE**

**Earth Day at 50/*Laudato Si'* at 5:  
An Urgent Appeal for Action**

# EARTH DAY 2020

## Revised Participant Program Guide

This program was originally created to be used by a parish, school, youth group, university, religious community, or other group that is interested in exploring how we as Catholics can respond to the call for urgent action on climate. Given recent world events, and the need for social distancing and in some places, imposed quarantines, we have revised it so that you can use it individually, or with your family.

We know that these are challenging times and we pray alongside you for God's grace and strength.

The Covid-19 crisis is happening alongside the climate crisis. The Earth Day 2020 program is meant to raise awareness of the urgent need to care for Earth, our vulnerable brother and sisters, and help people take real action. You are making a difference! On behalf of creation and vulnerable peoples throughout the world, we thank you!

In this hour-long program, you will have an opportunity to pray, learn, discuss, and take concrete actions, as individuals on behalf of God's creation.

Commemoration of two anniversaries:

**Earth Day: April 22, 2020** marks the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. Catholic Climate Covenant's 2020 Earth Day program focuses on the urgent need for climate action. It is designed to help the U.S. Catholic community commemorate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, a secular celebration that many faith communities have incorporated into their annual calendars for awareness and action. Catholic Climate Covenant is joining with the [Earth Day Network](#) in its commemoration of Earth Day and lifting up the urgent need for "Climate Action".

**Laudato Si' Anniversary:** This year also marks the fifth anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical letter, *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*. The anniversary will be marked between *Laudato Si' week* (May 16-May 24) and June 18th (the date of the encyclical's publication). In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis calls on the world to "dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet". This program is a critical part of that dialogue.

Though designed to commemorate these two anniversaries, please feel free to use the program at a time that is convenient.

### OPENING PRAYER (1 MINUTE)

O Creator,

Our world is large, and yet your Creation is so fragile.

We glimpse the needs of our common home, of our sisters and brothers, and those needs are great.

We want to turn away, but you call us back.

We want simple solutions, but you want us to help solve the complex problems.

Through your Church, you call us to listen, to learn, to reflect and to act.

Give us a deep sense of our place in this web of Creation.

Give us the wisdom of mind and generosity of heart to seek your will in the world today.

Inspire us to respond to the call to live in solidarity with all of your Creation, so that the Earth, and all children of God might live in dignity and peace.

Amen

(Written by [Education for Justice](#) staff. Copyright © Reprinted with permission.)



## READINGS (10 MINUTES)

### Reading #1

“Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his own face in a mirror. He sees himself, then goes off and promptly forgets what he looked like. But the one who peers into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres, and is not a hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, such a one shall be blessed in what he does.” (James 1: 22-25)

### Reading #2

“The Earth’s climate is changing. Temperatures are rising, snow and rainfall patterns are shifting, and more extreme climate events – like heavy rainstorms and record high temperatures – are already happening. Many of these observed changes are linked to the rising levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in our atmosphere, caused by human activities.” (Climate Change Indicators in the United States, US EPA, <https://www.epa.gov/climate-indicators>)

### Reading #3

“Climate models project robust differences in regional climate characteristics between present-day and global warming of 1.5°C, and between 1.5°C and 2°C. These differences include increases in: mean temperature in most land and ocean regions, hot extremes in most inhabited regions, heavy precipitation in several regions, and the probability of drought and precipitation deficits in some regions...Limiting the risks from global warming of 1.5°C in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication implies system transitions.” (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) *Special Report Oct. 2018*)

### Reading #4

“The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development...Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home. Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded.” (*Laudato Si’* 13)

“I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all.” (*Laudato Si’* 14)

### Reading #5

“An education in ecological responsibility is urgent: responsibility for oneself, for others, and for the earth.” (*World Day of Peace Message in 1990*, Pope Saint John Paul II)

## VIDEO (12 MINUTES)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n\\_umVeme93U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n_umVeme93U)

## Reflection and Discussion (20 MINUTES)

If you are participating as an individual, we urge you to follow-up these individual reflections with discussions on the phone or online with members of your faith community or your school, or with your family. Some of these questions can be answered by you and your family. Follow-up with others in your community to discuss how they are taking action. Once we are again able to meet as communities, you can discuss how we will respond communally.

### Silent Reflection

- What impacted you most from the video?
- Both the Environmental Protection Agency and the United Nations predict dire climate impacts. What more can I be doing to lessen the impacts?

- Were you surprised that both Pope St. John Paul II and Pope Francis speak of the urgency of responsibility for the Earth?
- If you met one of the young Catholics in the video, imagine your conversation. How would you respond to their calls for action? Write down some of the ways you would respond.

### Discussion/Reflection questions

You have listened to the readings and watched the video.

- What can you (and/or your community) do to become **doers and not just “hearers”**?
- How could you (and/or your community) respond to the Holy Father’s urgent appeal for dialogue and action?
- What actions (**see list of possible actions below**) could you and/or your community undertake to lessen the projected impact on creation and our most vulnerable brothers and sisters? If you and your community have already taken action(s), what more can you do? Write down possible future actions that your community could undertake. Think about calling your friends, fellow parishioners, schoolmates, colleagues and discuss future actions.

### Possible Actions:

Look at this list of possible climate actions you might consider taking as an individual and/or as a community. These actions can help lower your carbon footprint or make yourself and others aware of climate vulnerabilities. Feel free to add your own ideas.

To get more information (and links to resources) for each of these actions go to [https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/files/2020\\_Climate\\_Action\\_Pledges.pdf](https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/files/2020_Climate_Action_Pledges.pdf) or use the QR code.

- Calculate my carbon footprint and commit to reduce it by at least 10% in 2020
- Refuse disposable plastic bottles, bags, straws, cutlery and cups! Say NO to single-use plastic.
- Walk, cycle, carpool, or use public transport
- Plant pollinator-friendly flowers and spread wildflower seeds.
- Switch to renewable energy
- Go meatless on Mondays and/or Fridays (at least)
- Reuse, recycle, lower my consumption of resources
- Use less water
- Speak to my elected officials about climate change
- Fly less and offset travel when possible
- Plant at least two trees in 2020
- Wash clothes in cold water and hang-dry clothes
- Install a programmable thermostat
- Replace appliances with Energy Star-rated ones
- Replace incandescent and compact fluorescent lights with LED lights
- Reduce my food waste
- Compost leaves and food waste
- Start conversations about climate change with family and friends
- Support youth-led climate movements
- Start/join a Creation Care Team in my parish or school
- Begin conversations about climate change with family and friends
- Pray for our common home and all Earth protectors
- Participate in public witness events that lift up care for creation.
- Other (name it)



## ACTIVITY (10 MINUTES)

a) Take the St. Francis/*Laudato Si'* Pledge: Please go to: <https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/program/st-francis-pledge> or use the QR code.

b) Make a pledge of how you will take climate action in 2020.

### Your Pledge:

My 2020 climate action pledge is:

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### As you make your 2020 Climate Pledge(s), please pray:

Creator God, grant us the wisdom to better care for the earth.  
Help us to act now for the good of future generations and all your creatures.  
Help us to become instruments of a new creation,  
Founded on the covenant of your love.

(Adapted from Cry of the Earth in [Jesuitresource.org](http://Jesuitresource.org))

Go online and submit your pledge so we can gather them and lift-up how the US Catholic community is taking climate action.

Submit your 2020 Climate Pledge(s) here: <https://catholicclimatecovenant.salsalabs.org/EarthDayPledges>

## CONCLUSION AND CLOSING PRAYER (2 MINUTES)

### Closing Prayer

O God, your creative love brought forth our world,  
Once a garden where humans could taste and see beauty and goodness.

But our eyes do not always see the sacredness of Creation.  
We do not always remember that it is Gift  
Given so that all humans may live and flourish.  
Inattention can change the world.  
Even mighty glaciers weep now.  
Lifestyles create pollution that blot out the sun.  
The very skies above us are threatened.  
Seas rise and whole peoples lose their homes.

O God, we ask you to  
Call us to renewal and to stewardship.  
Call us to solidarity with the earth and all its creatures.  
Give us new vision to see the fragile beauty that remains with us.  
Give us new spiritual energy to become active in loving the world  
through our daily lives,  
Give us new voices to speak out for environmental solidarity.  
Bless us with a love of your Creation  
So that we may glimpse your Eden once again.

(Adapted from a prayer by Jane Deren, [Education for Justice](http://EducationforJustice.org). Copyright © Reprinted with permission)

### Thank you for participating in this Earth Day program!

This program is a beginning. We hope you and your community will continue to work with us to protect all of God's creation. – Catholic Climate Covenant

For more information go to: [CatholicClimateCovenant.org](http://CatholicClimateCovenant.org)