

"Renew the face of the Earth."

www.graceinaction.org
April 2008

celebrate
April

- 4 St. Isidore
- 11 St. Stanislaus
- 17 Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha
- 25 St. Mark
- 29 St. Catherine of Siena

GRACE IN ACTION

LIVING CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP™



James Baca photo

try **this**

Parishes, parishioners can help restore paradise

A popular bumper sticker reads, "Save the earth: the only planet with chocolate." It's a sentiment worth snickers, yet stewardship of Earth is no laughing matter. Ages since Adam and Eve were evicted from the Garden of Eden, our planet is imperiled. Parishes can help improve the situation. In the name of good stewardship, we urge Catholics of goodwill to undertake any or all of the following good works that serve parishioners and the planet:



Photo courtesy SacredSites.com

St. Michael's Mount, England: "Our very contact with nature has a deep restorative power; contemplation of its magnificence imparts peace and serenity." – Pope John Paul II

Organize a weekend during which the parish collects hazardous materials such as batteries, motor oil, paint and cell phones, and arranges for proper disposal. ✿ Keep parish landscaping "green" by avoiding lawn and garden chemicals. ✿ Collect and recycle ink cartridges. ✿ Encourage carpooling to Mass and other parish activities. ✿ Mind the thermostat: Keep the church a little warmer in summer and cooler in winter to conserve energy. ✿ Investigate installing solar panels on parish buildings. ✿ Offer classes on proper use of gas grills and fireplaces. ✿ Organize a plant swap. ✿ Sell or distribute canvas shopping bags with your parish logo. ✿ Plan seasonal activities such as mower-blade sharpening in the spring, a leaf drop in the fall. ✿ Invite master gardeners to speak during winter to help people plan planting. ✿

- ✿ Add bird and bat houses, birdbaths and feeders on parish grounds.
- ✿ Pass around a collection basket filled with envelopes of easy-to-grow seeds this spring.
- ✿ Host a blessing of seeds or distribute prayers for gardeners to bless their plots.
- ✿ Host composting classes and classes on creating one's own cleaning products from common materials such as baking soda, lemon juice and vinegar.
- ✿ Add environmental tips to parish bulletins.
- ✿ Use earth-friendly cleaning products around the parish.
- ✿ Organize a magazine exchange so parishioners can swap periodicals.
- ✿ Use energy efficient appliances and low-flow water systems.
- ✿ Offer classes on the teachings of St. Francis of Assisi.
- ✿ Replace all parish lights with energy efficient bulbs.
- ✿ Use recycled/unbleached paper products in restrooms and offices and unbleached paper towels and coffee filters.





Photo courtesy SacredSites.com

Tradition holds that Mount Ararat, in Eastern Turkey, is the site where Noah's ark landed. The ark's existence on Ararat is mentioned around 70 B.C. by Josephus and around A.D. 1300 by Marco Polo.

sowingseeds

"Let our souls be mountains; let our spirits be stars"

"Beyond simply appreciating natural beauty, there is the active stewardship of ecological concern."

— *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*
U.S. Catholic bishops' stewardship pastoral

As stewards, we step up to the responsibilities of caring for creation, preserving the world's wonders for future generations to enjoy. And enjoyment seems to be key: The more we enter into the natural world, the more we enjoy it; and the more we enjoy nature, the more willing we are to help conserve it.

Bear in mind this Gaelic mantra: "Let our souls be mountains. Let our spirits be stars."

How might you enjoy nature more? What would it mean for you if your soul were a mountain? How does your spirit resemble a star?

kidscorner

Steward God's earth

God created the heavens and the earth, but good stewards must help take good care of creation. This month, do something to celebrate Earth Day:

- Be kind to animals. 🌻 Pick up trash. 🌻 Walk or ride your bike instead of riding in a car.
- 🌻 Conserve water: Turn off the faucet when brushing your teeth.
- 🌻 Turn off lights. 🌻 Keep the refrigerator door closed. 🌻 Do not litter. 🌻 Help plant a tree or flowers. 🌻 Reduce. Reuse. Recycle. 🌻 Bring your own shopping bag. 🌻 Make a donation to an earth-friendly organization.



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Earth home to human family

POPE BENEDICT XVI makes his first visit to the United States this month, visiting Washington, D.C., and New York City April 15-20. The Pontiff's message for the 2008 World Day of Peace included comments on the environment.

"The family needs a home, a fit environment in which to develop its proper relationships. For the human family, this home is the earth, the environment that God the Creator has given us to inhabit with creativity and responsibility. We need to care for the environment: it has been entrusted to men and women to be protected and cultivated with responsible freedom, with the good of all as a constant guiding criterion. ... Respecting the environment does not mean considering material or animal nature more important than man. ... Nor must we overlook the poor, who are excluded in many cases from the goods of creation destined for all. Humanity today is rightly concerned about the ecological balance of tomorrow. ... Prudence does not mean failing to accept responsibilities and postponing decisions; it means being committed to making joint decisions after pondering responsibly the road to be taken, decisions aimed at strengthening that covenant between human beings and the environment, which should mirror the creative love of God, from whom we come and toward whom we are journeying.

"In this regard, it is essential to 'sense' that the earth is 'our common home' and, in our stewardship and service to all, to choose the path of dialogue rather than the path of unilateral decisions. ... Problems looming on the horizon are complex and time is short. In order to face this situation effectively, there is a need to act in harmony. One area where there is a particular need to intensify dialogue between nations is that of the stewardship of the earth's energy resources."

CNS Photo



For Pope John Paul II's prophetic remarks on ecological conversion, visit www.graceinaction.org.

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