

“We stand at a critical moment in Earth’s history, a time when humanity must choose its future”

Earth Charter Preamble

“The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all.”

Pope Francis, Laudato Si’ (23)

Climate is a common good, and Pope Francis also indicates that climate change “represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day. It is a global problem with grave implications including environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods.” Laudato Si’ (25)

We know and have known for some time that the cries and urgencies of our common home, Earth, call us to continuous actions for the sake of generations of life to follow us. ***In what ways can we respond?***

One way is to pray for the 40,000 participants including world leaders, environmental groups, religious groups and NGO’s who will be in Paris for the UN Climate Change Summit from Nov 30- Dec 11. ***Let us pray fervently for an all-encompassing breakthrough to an international resolve and agreement that embraces attainable targets, innovative strategies to mitigate global warming.***

In addressing the challenges of climate change, one popular tool of assessment is our ‘ecological footprint’ which compares human demand with Earth’s limited ecological capacity. Today, as we may already know, the rate of consumption in North America alone exceeds Earth’s sustainability. Another way this has been expressed is that, if everyone on Earth lived how North Americans live it would take approximately three Earths to sustain us all. We might ask ourselves what message this tells us about ‘enough?’

‘Carbon footprint’ is a subset of our ecological footprint. It tries to assess the greenhouse gases (CO₂) we emit by examining such things as our energy use in transportation, household, food, clothing, water use and so forth. It includes the activities that create CO₂ gases and also those that can help lighten our CO₂ impact. Both factor into the equation of our carbon footprint.

Click here for **carbon footprint strategy for lightening our own footprint**. We invite you to reflect on it and to respond creatively to any new challenges that it may offer you and/or your household. Sharing the many solutions to address the challenges before us can help empower us all.

Another way to reduce carbon footprint is to **purchase carbon offsets**. Individuals and institutions purchase offsets from organizations who then invest this money into projects that reduce Co₂ emissions.¹

We all know that humankind must make significant reductions in Co₂ emissions in order to address the global problem of climate change. **The problem will not go away soon, but let's not lose hope**. Even now we sense an air of optimism as leaders gather for the Summit in Paris. And our own faith as Christians impels us to respond with countless acts of love for Earth, and for a hoped-for future.

Quoting John Paul II, Pope Francis writes:

“If the simple fact of being human moves people to care for the environment of which they are a part, Christians in their turn ‘realize that their responsibility within creation, and their duty towards nature and the Creator, are an essential part of their faith.’”
Laudato Si’ (64)

In faith let us do all we can to collaborate and work together for the good of our common home.

¹ The David Suzuki Foundation www.davidsuzuki.org has a lengthy guide for consumers, businesses and organizations re: purchasing offsets. Carbon offsetting is essentially a service: a purchaser pays someone else to create greenhouse reductions by planting trees, creating wind farms, doing landfill gas recovery and others. High quality carbon offsets create real reductions in greenhouse gas emissions while minimizing other related environmental concerns. The Suzuki guide uses key offset quality criteria. They also look for a vendor’s transparency on their website and the extent to which they provide the public with credible information about climate change and solutions.