



CATHOLIC DIOCESE
OF LEXINGTON

Roman Catholic Diocese of Lexington, KY

THE CATHOLIC CENTER'S CARE FOR CREATION:

Policies, Guidelines, and Next Steps

March 1, 2024

Preamble:

On October 4, 2023, Pope Francis issued *Laudate Deum*, an apostolic exhortation, as a follow-up to his 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si'*. In the exhortation, he observed that faced with a collapsing world, our responses have been inadequate. While recognizing the truth that “the most effective solutions will not come from individual efforts alone, but above all from major political decisions on the national and international level” (69), Pope Francis nevertheless affirmed the role individuals have to play in changing the current culture through personal action. For example, he noted, “Efforts by households to reduce pollution and waste, and to consume with prudence, are creating a new culture.” (71)

It is in this spirit that the Catholic Center’s Care for Creation document provides the following set of policies, guidelines, and commitments for those who act on behalf of the chancery. This document does not present an exhaustive list of expectations and requirements, rather it provides a start and invites each staff member to explore new and creative ways to further our shared commitment to care for creation.

Responsibility for Compliance/Enforcement

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Lexington holds accountable all chancery personnel for maintaining the policies in this document. Violation of the policies outlined in this document or any other applicable diocesan policy will lead to progressive disciplinary action (see the Employee Handbook for more information).

Chancery personnel are responsible for following the guidelines provided in this document to the extent possible.

To ensure compliance, everyone with supervisory responsibilities in the chancery will:

1. ensure that the Catholic Center’s Care for Creation document is provided to, reviewed with, and accepted by new chancery personnel.
2. immediately and appropriately address questions or issues resulting from the application of the policies and guidelines identified in the Catholic Center’s Care for Creation document.

THE SAINT FRANCIS PLEDGE

I/We Pledge 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 causes and moral dimensions of climate change.
 - ASSESS how we - as individuals and in our families, parishes, and other affiliations - contribute to climate change through our own energy use, consumption, waste, etc.
 - ACT to change our choices and behaviors to reduce the ways we contribute to climate change.
 - ADVOCATE for Catholic principles and priorities in climate change discussions and decisions, especially as they impact those who are poor and vulnerable.
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I. Policies

Section 1: Single-Use Plastics

Single-use plastics negatively impact our ecosystems and communities as it does not degrade and only a small percentage is successfully recycled. This policy intends to decrease the Catholic Center's impact by reducing the number of plastics that are purchased and distributed on the Catholic Center campus.

1. The purchase and distribution of single-serving, single-use plastic water and beverage bottles by Catholic Center staff using Catholic Diocese of Lexington funds is not permitted.
 - a. Recyclable plastic water and beverage containers (i.e. multi-serving containers such as two-liter beverage containers) are permitted, but their use should be limited to the extent possible.
 - b. Catholic Center staff who purchase and/or use such multi-serving recyclable plastic water and beverage containers are responsible for ensuring the empty containers are placed in the proper recycling bin.
2. The use of disposable single-use plastic ware (forks, knives, spoons, plates, cups, etc.) is not permissible. Only reusable or locally compostable alternatives are permitted for use in the Catholic Center.
3. The use of single-use plastic bags should be minimized to the greatest extent possible. Where plastic bags are required, marine degradable plastic should be used if available.

Section 2: Recycling

Catholic Center personnel are to abide by the Catholic Center recycling protocol.

1. All aluminum and tin cans, plastic bottles and jugs, glass bottles and jars, dry cardboard, office paper, paper mail, newspaper, magazines, and catalogs are to be placed in recycling bins. See Addendum A for a more comprehensive list of recyclable items.
2. All food waste and coffee waste are to be placed in the compost bins.
3. All leftover food from gatherings is to be either given to participants to take home, left in the kitchen area for staff with an announcement made, or donated to the Catholic Action Center.
4. The donation of electronic waste (e-waste) is to be managed by the Diocesan Director of Property and Plant. All other e-waste is to be recycled at the Lexington Electronic Recycling Center at 1306 Versailles Road, Lexington, Kentucky 40508. See Addendum B for list of electronic recyclable items.
5. The disposal of all office furniture (desks, shelves, bookcases, chairs, tables), regardless of condition, is to be managed by the Diocesan Director of Property and Plant.

Section 3: Care for Creation Promoter

The Care for Creation Promoter is appointed by the Bishop and is charged with overseeing the implementation of, providing ongoing formation opportunities on, and ensuring compliance with the Care for Creation policies and guidelines.

1. The Care for Creation Promoter has the authority to initiate the progressive discipline process for policy violations and/or to address any lack of adherence to guidelines in consultation with the Bishop.
2. The Care for Creation Promoter oversees “next steps” planning and reporting for Care for Creation efforts across Catholic Center departments.
3. The Care for Creation Promoter can answer questions when a supervisor does not have the information or authority to interpret policies or guidelines.

II. Guidelines

Catholic Center personnel are expected to follow the following guidelines in exercising diocesan responsibilities:

- 1. Catering** – *give preference to green catering options offering no-waste or limited-waste services for all gatherings where food is served.*
- 2. Paper Use** - *reduce/eliminate paper use whenever possible.*
- 3. Carpooling** - *carpool when traveling to locations within the diocese to the extent possible.*
- 4. Virtual Meetings** – *utilize virtual meetings/video calls when travel is unnecessary.*
- 5. Cleaning Products** – *use only non-toxic cleaning products.*
- 6. Ink and Toner** – *buy only remanufactured ink and toner cartridges.*
- 7. Interior Paints** – *use only No-VOC (volatile organic compounds – like formaldehyde, d-Limonene, acetone, and ethanol) interior paints.*
- 8. Lighting** – *use only LED lighting.*
- 9. Power Strips** – *use only programmable power strips to eliminate phantom power waste.*
- 10. Zero Waste** – *strive for zero waste generation when hosting gatherings that include food and drink.*

Ongoing Activities

- Regularly Assess Investment Practices based on Socially Responsible Investment Guidelines from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
- Identify and engage opportunities for the Chancery to be active in national and international advocacy on this issue
- Identify green grants/ funding sources
- Strive for Zero Waste regarding food and drinks

Next Steps:

Implementation by March 1, 2024

- Send a letter from Bishop John to priests asking them to preach/teach about the climate crisis

Implementation by July 1, 2024

- Develop a plan to host information sessions on solar options for parishes and Catholic institutions in the diocese
- Develop a plan to offer workshops to parishes to foster local adoption of similar guidelines
- Add Green expertise to the Building Commission

Long-Term Goals (1-3 years)

- Building Commission - identify green certification processes/standards for buildings
- Building Commission - develop a 10-year plan to upgrade diocesan buildings to meet green goals
- Install water-saving fixtures
- Discuss/discern a path forward on reducing/eliminating meat consumption at chancery/diocesan events

Addendum A: Recyclable Items (<https://www.lexingtonky.gov/recycling>)

Never bag recyclables. Items should be put in the blue cart or recycling dumpster **clean, dry and loose.**

- Aluminum cans
- Steel cans, lids and canisters:
 - canned food (labels can stay on);
 - lids from spaghetti sauce, salsa and other glass food jars (lid separate from jar);
 - metal canisters for coffee, tea or cookies
- Plastic screw top bottles, jugs and jars (caps on):
 - soda and water bottles; milk jugs;
 - liquid laundry detergent jugs;
 - peanut butter jars
- Dry cardboard with packing material removed:
 - moving boxes;
 - shipping boxes;
 - carry out/delivery pizza boxes (throw away parts of the box with food residue or grease)
- Box board:
 - Gift, shoe, tissue, frozen food, and cereal boxes;
 - toilet paper and paper towel rolls;
 - wrapping paper rolls;
 - soda or beer boxes;
 - paper egg cartons;
 - clean, paper takeout containers (plastic takeout containers are **NOT** accepted)
- Paper:
 - office paper, envelopes, and packing paper;
 - magazines, catalogs, and newspaper envelopes; newspaper; packing paper
- Cartons:
 - milk, cream, juice cartons;
 - broth and soup cartons
- Brown paper:
 - paper grocery bags and craft paper
- Glass bottles and jars, colored and clear

Addendum B: Electronic Recyclable Items (<https://www.lexingtonky.gov/electronics-recycling>)

Acceptable items

- Computers, printers, copiers
- Printer cables, coaxial cables, RCA wires, HDMI cords, USB cables, power cords
- Printer cartridges and toner cases
- Alkaline batteries
- Cell phones and other communication devices
- Microwave ovens
- Televisions and monitors
- Vacuum cleaners
- CDs, DVDs and their cases
- VHS and cassette tapes
- Audio and video players/equipment
- Small corded electrical items such as toasters, hairdryers or radios
- Extension cords
- Holiday lights
- Fluorescent light tubes
- LED light bulbs
- MP3 players and handheld games
- Laptops and electronic tablets
- Rechargeable batteries (We do not accept automotive or other lead-acid batteries. Batteries Plus will accept all batteries for a fee.)

Unacceptable items

- Items that are not structurally intact, such as TVs with broken screens. (These items should be taken to the Bluegrass Regional Transfer Station at 1505 Old Frankfort Pike.)
- Automotive and other lead-acid batteries (Batteries Plus will accept all batteries for recycling for a fee.)
- Satellite dishes
- CFL light bulbs (Recycle them at Lowes or Home Depot)