



*“Whatever you did for the **least among my brothers and sisters,**
you did for me.” —MATTHEW 25:40*

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November 9, 2022

His Holiness
Pope Francis
The Apostolic Palace
00120 Vatican City

Your Holiness:

Peace be with you. I'm writing to request that you issue a papal decree to reinstate the obligation to observe meatless Fridays globally and to include the flesh of fish in your new proscription. I also request that you declare excommunication as the penalty for Catholics who continue to eat flesh on Fridays. This would set a compassionate example and ensure that the more than 1 billion Catholics around the world are doing their part to mitigate the climate catastrophe.

I'm writing on behalf of LAMBS, the Christian outreach division of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals U.S.—PETA entities have more than 9 million members and supporters globally, and PETA U.S. is the largest animal rights organization in the world. We applaud your recent statement that meat-eating is part of a “self-destructive trend.” Regrettably, meat is prominently featured on the United Nations' COP 27 climate conference menu, despite the organization's own recommendation that a global shift toward vegan eating is necessary to combat the worst effects of climate change, making a travesty of the meeting's purpose. You could help show the way to a more environmentally sound, humane, and ethical way of eating.

According to a recent University of Cambridge study, forgoing meat on Fridays could prevent over 55,000 metric tons of carbon from entering the atmosphere a year, a great start for the radical responses to the climate catastrophe that you recently called for. In that same vein, shifting entirely to plant-based foods would be even more beneficial, countering more than a decade of carbon dioxide emissions. Additionally, each person who goes vegan saves about 1,100 gallons of water, nearly 40 pounds of grain (as nowadays it's mainly fed to animals raised for food), and 30 square feet of forested land each day. Abstaining from eating flesh would do a world of good for the planet and all its inhabitants.

In the eyes of God, all animals are equally deserving of life, respect, and dignity, yet these things are denied to the billions of pigs, cows, chickens, and other animals who are killed for food worldwide. Instead of being free to explore the world around them, raise and care for their family, and enjoy nature in tranquility, they are raised on filthy factory farms and endure routine mutilations, such as castration and tail-docking—without any pain relief—before being sent on a terrifying journey to the slaughterhouse to endure a violent death. Fish are similarly confined to cramped enclosures on aquafarms, often while suffering from parasitic infections, illnesses, or debilitating injuries. Each person who eats vegan spares nearly 200 living, feeling beings a miserable fate each year.

Many of us grew up believing that killing animals for food or clothing is unremarkable, but it's plain that all killing requires violence and separating ourselves from the rest of creation. Genesis 1:29 teaches us that Eden was vegan and that humans flourished in harmony with animals. Surely, God designed us to be

caretakers, not killers. He put animals' fate into our hands only after He lamented our ancestors' wickedness and flooded the Earth. This likely left Noah's family with little to eat but animals. That's a bleak position to be in: Kill and eat God's sentient creations—or perish. Thankfully, today we don't face such desperation and are blessed with an abundance of choices.

To protect this planet and all of God's creatures, I pray you'll call on all Catholics to abstain from eating all flesh, including that of fish—at least on Fridays. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. Please let us know whether we can inform our supporters of your decision. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours in Christ,

Candice M. Kelsey
Faith Outreach & Engagement Campaign Coordinator
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