



You Can Make a Difference

Adults today protest for civil rights, for better wages, for the right to life, and other actions.

But 2018 brought a surprising new protest: **Children have become advocates**, too, for safe classrooms, fair compensation for teachers, AND a healthy environment. They know **we need to protect God’s creation** so that future generations can enjoy it.

Activism from children is growing. Children are learning that adults, who should be protecting the next generation, are instead sometimes recklessly plundering the earth and, in doing so, are **risking the very existence of future generations of humans**.

In Sweden, **sixteen-year-old Greta Thunberg regularly goes on strike**. As her schoolmates attend classes, she sits on the steps of the Swedish Parliament. She waits there for hours, a living testament to those who leave and enter the building, a reproach to lawmakers. Her purpose? **To urge legislators to act on “the most important issue in the world—the planet crisis.”** At the end of such days, friends from school help her catch up on the class work she has missed.



“School Strike for the Climate”

When Greta began her call for environmental justice for future generations, her parents asked her if she really wanted to undertake such a major program. She did—and she has done so with passion. Her voice has become so urgent that she was asked to address the international climate gatherings in both Davos and Poland. Her appeal was powerful. She reminded world leaders that they have created programs of hope for today’s children. Then she said starkly, **“I don’t want your hope. I want you to act.”**



Even younger than Greta was **Milo Cress, a nine-year-old when he launched Be Straw Free**, an organization dedicated to eliminating single-use plastic straws. Can refusing to use plastic straws make any difference? Straw makers say Yes. They tell us that **Americans use a half billion straws each day**—enough to circle the entire earth 2 ½ times!

In our parish, we too are trying to become better stewards of God’s creation. Perhaps the biggest hurdle we face is believing that as individuals and families we can make any difference in the growing crisis that Earth now faces. But both Greta and Milo show us that **one or two can make that difference**. With repeated small acts, together we can help preserve God’s creation for the generations that will follow us.

Bishop Oscar Romero, recently canonized martyr, explains how it works:
“We cannot do everything [but we can] do something. . . . We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are the workers, not master builders. . . . We are prophets of a future not our own.”

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church



Creation Care

7 SINGLE-USE SWAPS

AND THE TRASH YOU CAN SAVE IN ONE YEAR

4.4 lbs of trash per day \times **324** mil people in the US = **700,000** tons of trash made every day in the US

“THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE ARE THE ONES WHO DO THE LITTLE THINGS CONSISTENTLY.”

