

# Roth: Earth Day in action

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## Earth Day in action

April is a busy time with significant holidays like Passover and Easter.

It's also a time to celebrate the reawakening of the natural world around us as the spring equinox springs fauna and flora to life around us. And with Earth Day, April 22, approaching, it's a great time to jump up, get out and put our lives in action for the world around us.

The first Earth Day on April 22, 1970, activated 20 million Americans from all walks of life and is widely credited with launching the modern environmental movement, although a

growing consciousness had been building in America for decades. Soon the passage of landmark acts, such as the Clean Air Act, the Endangered Species Act and the Clean Water Act brought national prominence to these efforts. By the 1990s, Earth Day had spread across the Earth, activating more than 200 million people in over 140 countries and creating a true global awareness of the world we share in common.

So as we approach the 47th birthday of Earth Day in America, we can take great comfort in the tremendous progress that has actually been achieved here and abroad over these years and yet we have serious concerns that continue to mount and are causing grave, yes, grave consequences.

- **Forests:** Our planet is currently losing 56 acres of forests every minute, amounting to over 15 billion trees every year. These fading forests are necessary to combat climate change, de-carbonize our atmosphere, sustain important species and provide shelter and security to people across the globe. Former forested areas are now prone to massive erosion and displacement of cultures and animals worldwide.

- **Species:** Earth's species are now going extinct faster than ever before and we have entered what credentialed scientists have described as a "sixth mass extinction brought on by global human activity."

Whether you are motivated by faith, as many faithful people believe we have a calling to honor the world provided by the Creator, or whether you are motivated by a humanistic call to save lives from climate harm and disease brought on by droughts and famine, there are a few easy and obvious actions steps you can take to make a difference:

- Plant a tree or donate to plant a tree.

There are a number of national and world charities that do great work to reforest our planet and your modest donation can go a long way. Likewise, visit a local nursery and plant a new

tree in your own yard, with your family's help, and create a daily reminder of the tree of life out your own front door.

- Reduce your footprint.

There are many online tools to measure your ecological footprint to learn how to reduce your footprint on the planet. Here is a great link to get started: [www.earthday.org/reduce-footprint-take-ecological-footprint-quiz](http://www.earthday.org/reduce-footprint-take-ecological-footprint-quiz).

- Stop using disposable plastic.

Make the decision today and simply stop. Carry your own bag into stores, insist on recycled paper bags or simply carry items in your arms the old-fashioned way, but however you stop using plastic, just stop. They are filling up landfills, polluting oceans and entangling and killing animals everywhere.

- Believe in science and let your voice be known.

There are activities all around this country, including a March for Science on the National Mall on Earth Day to fight efforts to silence science and instead create community engagements and knowledge sharing. As my partner likes to say: "science doesn't care if you believe it or not, it just is science."

This Earth Day is a great time to engage with yourself, your children, your family, your church, community and neighbors to do deliberate acts of good to help save Mother Earth. She really needs our help.

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