



Climate Emergency; cutting carbon impacts while saving money and

Church of England's Lead Bishop for Environmental Affairs.

"Long before the impacts of meat on the climate were understood, the idea of Christians periodically foregoing meat was not so very new"

Graham Usher

According to the UN's Food and Agricultural Organisation, about 14 per cent of all emissions come from meat and dairy production. Within this, chicken and pork have a smaller climate impact. Dairy and lamb sit in the middle, while beef is nearly always the least sustainable choice.

Yet, long before the impacts of meat on the climate were understood, the idea of Christians periodically foregoing meat was not so very new.

Days of fasting have been observed in the Church of England for centuries and are marked in the Church's calendar, although there are no particular instructions on how fasting should be constituted.

The Book of Common Prayer calls for the following as 'days of fasting and abstinence': Every Friday of the year except Christmas Day if it falls on a Friday, the forty days of Lent and Certain days in the four seasons of the year (Ember days and Rogation days) which call for penitence and prayer.

Common Worship calls for 'days of discipline and self-denial' in the 'weekdays of Lent and every Friday in the year' excluding Principal Feasts and Festivals outside Lent and Fridays in Eastertide.

And one of the Books of Homilies (a series of 16th century sermons developing the authorised reformed doctrines of the Church of England) contains references to fasting being an abstinence from 'meat, drink, and all natural food'.

These days, many people choose to 'give something up' for Lent. This is an opportunity to stop and think about what we consume, and the kind of impact our consumption has on the world we live in.

Climate change is already having a devastating impact on some of the world's most vulnerable communities and the World Health Organisation estimates that between 2030 and 2050, climate change will cause approximately 250,000 additional deaths per year.

This will be through malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and heat stress, and regions with weak health infrastructure – mostly in developing countries – will be the least able to cope without assistance to prepare and respond.

Christians are called to safeguard creation and renew the life of the earth, and in doing so we cannot ignore the plight of our brothers and sisters both near and far.

So, during Lent, when many will consider how to take better care of creation, choosing to be meat-free one or more days a week can be about both our spiritual practice of fasting and a practical way to tread more lightly on the earth.

Whether that's on a Friday, which is traditional in the Church, or joining in with 'meat-free Monday', it's a positive step we can take for our spiritual health, our physical health, and the health of the planet. And when we do eat meat, find out more about the factors that can increase carbon

impacts, and choose more local sustainable sources.



nd's Environmental Working Group

Diocese of Norwich

More ideas

Read [suggestions for a greener lent](#) from the charity A Rocha, who run the Eco Church scheme.

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