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# Creation

## Church calls Catholics to care for earth

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

Saving the environment starts with something as simple as saving your table scraps, according to Edwin Derenthal, chairman of the social ministry committee at St. Patrick's Church in Owego.

Inspired by fellow parishioner Frank Orlando, who gave a presentation on composting at the parish last year, Derenthal has been collecting his vegetable scraps and saving them to bury in his garden on a regular basis.

Composting returns nutrients to the soil, enabling the growth of new produce, while decreasing the amount of garbage left from meals, Derenthal said. He added that less waste means less use of landfill space.

"I personally think this is one way that people - without too much trouble - can aid the environment," Derenthal said of composting.

### Increasing concern

Like many people, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, Derenthal is concerned that the planet can't take much more abuse, a worry highlighted by celebrations around Earth Day, Tuesday, April 22.

Since it was first celebrated in 1970, Earth Day has helped to raise environmental awareness for millions. But the concerns the day raises are as old as humanity, according to Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer of the Diocese of San Angelo, Texas. Writing in his diocesan newspaper, the *West Texas Angelus*, in observance of the 27th annual Earth Day, the bishop asked his flock to note that:

"Concern for the environment is not something born of 20th-century technology and consumption. It has its roots in the Old Testament. ... In Genesis we are told that God made women and men stewards of God's creation."

Awareness of the planet's environmental problems has become a "defining sign of the time," he wrote. The current generation has a clearer insight into "God's whole creation in Earth, so precious, but poisoned and in increasing peril," he added.

As an inhabitant of an increasingly polluted planet, Derenthal, like Bishop Pfeifer, sees many problems on the horizon if more people don't take even small steps like composting.

"There isn't any doubt that the population of the world is increasing," Derenthal said. "If we don't take care of the environment, we will have less and less usable space for people to live here ..."

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Story by Rob Cullivan • Illustration by Kim Parks & Matthew Scott