

**Millions Revive Ancient Lenten Practice of Going Vegan**  
From [Interfaith Vegan Coalition](#)  
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**In Defense of Animals' Interfaith Vegan Coalition** is poised to help millions of Christians and Catholics go vegan for Lent, which begins on Feb. 22, Ash Wednesday, and ends on April 9, the days before Easter. During this time of spiritual reflection, many Christians identify with the 40-day fast and suffering of Christ by giving up eating meat, dairy, and eggs, drinking alcohol, watching television, swearing, or smoking.



Going vegan for Lent also helps the environment. “Each person who eats vegan during Lent spares the lives of about 40 animals, saves 44,000 gallons of water, helps reduce wasteful agricultural land use by 75%, and prevents 800 pounds of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere,” said Candice Kelsey, Faith Outreach & Engagement Coordinator for **PETA LAMBS**.

“Lent is traditionally a time of abstinence,” said Dave Bookless, a director of theology for **A Rocha International**, as quoted in the journal [Christianity Today](#). “In quite a lot of Christian cultures, if you look back through Christian history, people were vegetarian during Lent. That was quite a common thing in many parts of the world. And it’s still a common thing in some Christian traditions.”

Fasting from meat, dairy, and eggs for Lent is more common than many realize. “We encourage all Catholics throughout the world to go Vegan for Lent 2022,” said Chris Fegan of **Catholic Concern for Animals**. “We believe that this is good for the individual Catholic concerned in many, many ways as well as good news for the nonhuman creation.”

“Nearly [3 million Russians](#) will be practicing being vegans for Lent,” notes Jim Sannes, of the **Unitarian Universalist Animal Ministry**.

Eating only plant foods has helped many people grow spiritually during Lent because they are fasting from cruelty. [Sharon Bolden received a huge surprise](#) when she gave up meat and dairy for Lent. Instead of feeling deprived, Sharon began to notice many of her physical ills disappearing and her energy, faith, and happiness increasing.

By Easter, she resolved to adopt a vegan diet and began teaching the spiritual and healing power of veganism.

“Those 40 days of being vegan changed everything,” said Sharon Bolden. “My body, mind, and spirit had begun to heal. I had transformed to veganism and I wasn’t going back. People saw the changes in me, and I saw them in myself. I was on a new path of living vegan and was determined to stay on this vegan path for the rest of my life.”

Going plant-based for Lent can lead to a lifetime commitment to vegan living and to an uplifting and radical connection to the Divine.

“When we stop our participation in the killing of God’s precious children, no matter what species they may be, we are acting in harmony with our true hearts, our highest ideals and our deep connection to all sacred life,” explains Judy Carman, co-founder of **Circle of Compassion** and the **Interfaith Vegan Coalition** and author of *Homo Ahimsa: Who We Really Are and How We’re Going to Save the World*. “Our own bodies respond with renewed health, because we are no longer eating the suffering, fear, and agony of animals who have been abused and killed.”

“When our personal sacrifice alleviates the suffering of others, we move closer to God,” said Barbara Gardner, founder of the **Animal Interfaith Alliance**. “This is what Lent requires of us and what can be achieved when we give up harmful practices at Lent.”

“There is no greater gift you can give in repentance and habit-breaking than to abstain from the culture of violence for 40 days by researching, learning about, and then undertaking a 40-day fast from the torturous products of animal use and agriculture by eating as we were originally designed by the Lord in Genesis 1:29 — to consume plants, nuts and seeds,” said Tams Nicholson of **All-Creatures.org**, who reminds us how important the Lenten season is for Christians to recognize our faults as human beings, and how incredibly valuable it is to use these 40 days to break worldly habits that bind us.

Nicholson explained, “My own experience in going vegan for Lent, over a decade ago, broke an underlying current of death running throughout my life that I had not been aware of. It made me a better steward, improved my physical and mental health, increased my zest for life, and even changed my dreams. Breaking those violent worldly habits has been a blessing from God.

Pastor Frank and Mary, founders of **All-Creatures.org**, have been sharing their [Christian Vegan recipes](#) and much more since the 1990s. Today, ‘plants, nuts, and seeds’ includes everything from fast food, to five-course meals, luscious desserts, and so much more. When eating this way, we only give up cruelty while we gain variety, taste, satisfaction, and better health.”

“[In Defense of Animals’ Vegan Starter Guide](#) can help with your Lenten promise, as well as the Interfaith Vegan Coalition’s [Christian](#) and [Catholic](#) Vegan Advocacy Kits, which contain quotes, books, articles, videos, hymns, songs, prayers, websites, rituals, and spiritual support,” suggests Lisa Levinson, of **In Defense of Animals** and co-founder of the **Interfaith Vegan Coalition**. “We created these resources to make it easier for everyone to go vegan for Lent and beyond!”

### Quotes from Interfaith Leaders

“There is no better time than now to go vegan! Lent is a perfect time where we really want to focus on our spiritual lives. We can give our souls a Holy infusion of joy and love by choosing a peaceable vegan diet. A vegan diet will not only help us in our love for God and neighbor (all living beings) it will also contribute to our physical health and well-being. Go vegan for the 40 days of Lent! There are many vegan

websites that offer balanced, nutritious and delicious vegan meals! You will quickly discover for yourself that this compassionate way of eating will go beyond the 40 days of Lent!”

– Father Donatello Iocco

“For me, Lent is a time to reflect on Jesus’ ministry of compassion, peace, and reconciliation. Choosing a vegan diet for Lent breaks the cycle of violence between humanity and the natural world. Doing so not only spares nonhumans great suffering and misery, but it also helps human relationships, because we cannot find peace in our hearts if a central component of our lives – eating – is filled with violence. Many people, upon experiencing the sense of peace and connection that arises from being vegan during Lent, choose to stay vegan.”

– Stephen R. Kaufman, MD, Chair, **Christian Vegetarian Association**

“We know from Genesis 1:29 that God commanded us to eat only plant-based foods. And we know from Isaiah 65:25 that that is still God’s intention. So do we want to do God’s will or not?”

– Virginia Bell, **Catholic Action for Animals**

“Years – too many – passed between cutting flesh out of my diet, and going vegan. One word enabled me to make the change: Slavery. For people who want to make the transition but find that cheese still has them in its grip, I suggest they decide to give up profiting from slavery for those forty days. To develop a habit in which you truly follow your heart turns out to be truly liberating.”

– Gracia Fay Ellwood, **Quaker Animal Kinship**

### **Quotes from Interfaith Organizations**

“What better way to worship the Prince of Peace than leaving the violence off our plates, and eating the ideal diet that God prescribed for us in Genesis 1:29. Going vegan for Lent is a great way to honor Jesus, while also blessing the planet, our health and reducing the suffering of innocent animals. And it’s a wonderful opportunity to test drive a non-violent lifestyle that not only brings us more in alignment with our true compassionate nature, but has the potential to transform our lives if we choose to continue down its path.”

– Thomas Wade Jackson, Director of *A Prayer For Compassion*

“Going vegan for Lent provides for not only the purification of the soul, but for the uplift of creation. In choosing foods from the plant kingdom in the weeks leading up to Easter, a believer actively chooses peace on earth and acknowledges the sanctity of all life. And many who do this find that they feel so good, physically and psychically, that they never go back to the way they used to eat.”

– Victoria Moran, author, podcaster, and co-founder of **Compassion Consortium**

“Whether in France, Switzerland, Canada, Poland, members of the Church are talking and showing some concern for animals. The time is right, as Lent approaches, to consider a spiritual journey without animal consumption and to discover the virtues of a compassionate diet.”

– Estela Torres, **Fraternité pour le Respect Animal**

“Lent is the daily spirituality of vegans honoring the sacredness of all life. The energy from the sun enters our bodies through the Son of God. This spiritual transformation enlightens a state of consciousness that all seekers yearn for. Ash Wednesday is the remembrance that no sacrifice of an animal was needed for our Salvation. During Lent, many Christians observe a period of fasting, repentance, moderation, self-denial, and spiritual discipline, the essence of veganism. The purpose of the Lenten season is to set aside time for reflection on our self-righteous indignation of animal slaughter. Jesus Christ came to put an end

to the suffering of all animals, including human animals by his sacrifice, his life, death, burial, and resurrection.”

– Frank Lane, **UnitedVegan.com**

“The decision to eat or not to eat animal products is not a mere personal food choice. This perpetuates the view of animals as material objects, rather than as fellow beings with precious lives of their own. It hides the fact that in choosing to consume animal products, we choose a life based on slavery and violence. Peace activist, Helen Nearing, said that one can assume a degree of sentience in plants and still recognize that ‘There’s clearly a distinction between a newborn baby lamb and a newly ripened tomato.’”

– Karen Davis, PhD, President, **United Poultry Concerns**

### **Quotes from Religious Scholars**

“Christian traditions teach that humans are to assist God in reconciling creation to a peaceful, vegan world. The Christian commitment to end suffering is fundamental to Christian teachings... Imagine Jesus walking through a slaughterhouse, a vivisection lab, or a poultry farm, ‘How would the Prince of Peace feel about contemporary exploitation of pigs, mice, and hens? Would he justify these institutions as readily as we do?’”

– Lisa Kemmerer, PhD, author of *Animals and World Religions*

“At their essence, Jesus’ teachings are about love. Knowing that God so loved the world to give us the gift of life, Jesus stood against animal sacrifices and for love - loving our neighbors as ourselves...including the ‘neighbors’ we were socialized to exclude from our sphere of compassion. Jesus welcomed the social outcasts and placed no limits on love. Many modern scholars believe Jesus was a vegetarian and we can certainly agree that to live as love, as Jesus taught, would mean to live vegan nowadays. There is no physical need for animal products in our diet, so granting our ‘animal neighbors’ the dignity to live lives of freedom and joy simply makes the most sense if we want to live Jesus’ teachings of love to their fullest extent.”

– Charlotte Cressey, religious scholar

### **Lenten Resources by Interfaith Vegan Coalition Member Organizations & Allies:**

- [40-Day Plant-Based Lent Challenge](#): CreatureKind offers this new challenge along with [this free course](#) to support your reflection.
- [40 Days With God’s Creatures](#): Sarx has organized its Lent guide for millions of Christians worldwide who seek to draw closer to the heart of God and celebrate the redemption of the world in Jesus Christ at Easter.
- [40 Days of Lentils](#): PETA LAMBS encourages readers to spread compassion for Lent and provides [40 scrumptious vegan lentil recipes](#) to help.
- [Going Vegan this Lent Will be the Kindest Thing You’ve Ever Done](#): PETA LAMBS provides 5 reasons to go vegan for Lent and take the vegan pledge.
- [Try Tasty Vegan Fish Dinners for Lent](#): PETA LAMBS offers top picks for delicious vegan fish fare to help people abstain from eating land animals on Fridays.
- [Religion-Specific Vegan Advocacy Kits](#): Interfaith Vegan Coalition offers quotes, books, articles, videos, hymns, songs, prayers, websites, rituals, and spiritual support.

[Vegan Starter Guide](#): In Defense of Animals’ popular downloadable guide contains recipes, self-care resources, and much more!

**Interfaith Vegan Coalition Member & Allied Organizations Quoted Above:**

- [A Prayer for Compassion Film](#)
- [All-Creatures.org](#)
- [Animal Interfaith Alliance](#)
- [Catholic Action for Animals](#)
- [Catholic Concern for Animals](#)
- [Christian Vegetarian Association](#)
- [Circle of Compassion](#)
- [Compassion Consortium](#)
- [CreatureKind](#)
- [Fraternité pour le Respect Animal](#)
- [In Defense of Animals](#)
- [PETA LAMBS](#)
- [Quaker Animal Kinship](#)
- [SARX](#)
- [United Poultry Concerns](#)