

PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

Most Reverend Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Armagh

31 March 2022

Your Excellency:

Greetings from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and our many Christian supporters around the world. We were moved by Pope Francis' message for Lent in which he said, "Lent invites us to conversion, to a change in mindset, so that life's truth and beauty may be found not so much in possessing as in giving, not so much in accumulating as in sowing and sharing goodness." In keeping with those words, we respectfully ask that you encourage Christians to embrace a change in mindset about *who* is on their plates by forgoing fish and embracing only vegan foods this Good Friday.

While many Christians choose not to eat land animals on Fridays during Lent, sea animals are strangely exempt from that act of mercy, even though they, too, are intelligent and sensitive, feel pain, value their own lives, and don't want to die. Fish are also interesting individuals with distinct personalities. They pass down knowledge, have cultural traditions, and "talk" to one another using low-frequency sounds that human ears can't hear. Some woo potential mates by singing to them or creating intricate works of art. Many gently rub against one another in a display of affection. And no ocean animal wants to be impaled on a hook, crushed in a net, suffocated, or boiled alive.

As you likely know, there has been serious theological debate as to whether Jesus actually ate fish or if the word has been mistranslated. While we may never know for certain, what we do know is that today, most of us don't need to kill animals in order to survive. We have a plethora of healthy, humane choices at our fingertips. And a loving, merciful God would not want us to cause harm unnecessarily.

At Easter, we celebrate the fact that Jesus gave his life so that we might be absolved of our sins. But it isn't logical or righteous for us to pray for forgiveness then continue the sinful practice of hurting animals to satisfy our own greedy desire for the taste of their flesh – especially when plant-based options abound.

It is our hope that with your encouragement, Christians will spend this Good Friday showing the same selfless compassion to the animal kingdom that Jesus showed to us – and that we can carry that love for Him and all of creation with us all year long.

Respectfully yours,

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Registered in England and Wales
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