

## Season of Creation: Week 2

### Contamination of our Earth – Use of Plastics

#### Some Facts:

- Plastic waste can take anywhere from 20 to 500 years to decompose, and even then it never fully disappears; it just gets smaller and smaller: Microplastics.
- Microplastics are in our food – such as wheat and rice (even lettuce!) – our water, and the air we breathe. They have been found on the summit of Everest, the depths of the Mariana Trench, the organs of Atlantic Penguins and even in the placenta of unborn babies.
- The UK tops the chart for plastic waste per person globally – second only to the US.
- UK households throw away an estimated **1.7 billion pieces of plastic a week**; that is the equivalent of 90 billion pieces per year!
- Recycling is good, but only 17% of what we put in our bins actually gets recycled. 11% goes into landfill; 14% gets exported; and 58% is incinerated polluting our atmosphere further (2024 figures)

#### It's not all bad news

- The UK has significantly reduced the use of single use carrier bags, and many shops now only provide paper bags.
- Some supermarkets are supporting small businesses who are cutting out single-use plastics from domestic cleaning products
- Some larger businesses have reduced their plastic packaging; some offering items in cardboard or recycled materials.
- In most large towns and cities there are “refill” stations for staples
- The UK government has introduced strategies to discourage the use of plastics, for example, Plastic Packaging Tax, Extended Producer Responsibility, charges for single-use items; they have also banned plastic straws, stirrers and cotton buds
- After lobbying, the food Chain – MacDonalDs – stopped their use of plastic toys in their Children’s Meal packs
- It may be possible to recycle plant-based plastics hundreds of times, and a Japanese research team has developed a plastic that dissolves in seawater – but early days for that!
- The Royal Horticultural Society has banned the use of plastic based oases and in our parish we too are phasing this out of church flower arrangements.

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## What Can I do?

Most importantly, all of us can pray

### A prayer for our earth

All powerful God, you are present in the universe  
and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with your peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,  
so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it,  
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,

to be filled with awe and contemplation,

to recognize that we are profoundly united  
with every creature

as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle,  
for justice, love and peace.

### And if you would also like to do something more practically:

- Stop buying bottled water in plastic
- Consider using a Milkman – they do deliver to the area! – to get your milk in glass instead of plastic, or buy milk in cartons from supermarkets
- Buy soap bars instead of bath/shower gels and soap in plastic
- Other toiletries can also be bought in bars – deodorant, shampoos etc
- Switch to buying your washing product in cardboard instead of plastic – most big brands now offer this. You can also get toilet rolls wrapped in paper, not plastic.
- Buy foods in tins or cartons, or look for those with reduced plastic packaging
- Buy fruit and veg loosely if possible instead of in pre-packed plastic containers
- Collect all the plastic you would normally put in the recycling into a separate container and count the pieces at the end of the week. You may be surprised by how many pieces of plastic your household uses!

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