



STEWARDS OF OUR EARTH All of God's Creation

Social Justice Committee, Holy Cross Parish, Mt. Airy, December 11, 2022

Thinking of Recycling Those Plastics? Think Again.

We used to push recycling as an effective way to stave off the accumulation of plastics in our oceans and on our lands, thereby creating a cleaner and safer environment. However, “a recent report shows **the vast majority of the plastic we use, up to 95%, will wind up in a landfill or polluting our environment** -- even plastic we put in the blue recycling bin” (Laura Sullivan, ‘Recycling plastic is practically impossible -- and the problem is getting worse,’ NPR, October 24, 2022).

“By 2050, scientists predict that 99% of all seabird species will have eaten plastic. We can't recycle our way out of this problem -- especially now that we know that **recycling simply isn't the solution for plastic pollution**. In 2021, American households generated 51 million tons of plastic waste. Of that waste, only 2.4 million tons -- around 5% -- was recycled.” (*Environmental Action*, 11/11/22)

“The production of plastic itself even harms the environment by releasing dangerous greenhouse gas emissions, worsening the climate crisis, and polluting the air quality for residents who live nearby these giant facilities” (*Friends of the Earth*, 9/12/22).

“**It's clear we need to stop producing so much plastic**, and we can start by making plastic producers face the true cost of dealing with all this waste. [Tell the U.S. Senate to pass the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act](#) to make plastic companies financially responsible for the waste they create.” (*Environmental Action*, 11/11/22)

“The bill is designed to reduce the amount of plastic being produced in the first place by making producers of plastic products (such as packaging, single-use products, beverage containers, or food service products) fiscally responsible for collecting, managing, and recycling or composting the products after consumer use” (Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act of 2021, Congress.gov, last accessed November 4, 2022).

“Among other things, **the legislation would also phase out the use of certain single-use plastics**. Right now, it's one of the best pieces of proposed legislation we have to combat our planet's plastic pollution crisis.” (*Environmental Action*, 11/11/22)

In the meantime, we can try to reduce the amount of plastic we use, especially single-use plastic, and **let us pray** –

God of creation, help me navigate
the seasons of Advent and Christmas
in ways that care for our common home.
Lead me to share joy with family and friends
without excessive consumerism.

(*100 Days of Prayer 2022*, The Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Interest Group of the U.S. Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph)