



STEWARDS OF OUR EARTH All of God's Creation

Social Justice Committee, Holy Cross Parish, Mt. Airy, July 14, 2024

Plastic Free July

“In a recent investigation, researchers found microplastics in 94 percent of U.S. tap water samples.... **Plastic waste is found everywhere, including the farthest reaches of the Arctic, the deep seabed, and even in clouds and the atmosphere.** Over 1,500 wildlife species have been found to accidentally ingest plastic, and even more wildlife are injured or die every year due to plastic entanglement....

The chemicals used to make plastic include carcinogens, hormone disruptors, obesity-causing compounds, and substances that can cause harm to the liver, brain, kidneys, and the cardiovascular, immune, and reproductive systems.... In addition, 99 percent of all plastics are made from fossil fuels and are a growing contributor to climate change.

And unfortunately, we can't recycle our way out of the plastics problem. Only 5–6 percent of postconsumer plastic was recycled in the United States in 2021. Most plastic isn't designed to be recycled, and most of the different kinds of plastics can't be recycled together....

Plastic pollution is a human and planetary health crisis that requires immediate and decisive action at all levels of government. The plastics crisis has become so acute that nations around the world agreed in 2022 to begin negotiations on a global plastics treaty to address the threats posed by plastic pollution, including reducing both the production and use of plastics, especially unnecessary plastics and the most toxic plastics.

As one of the world's largest producers and consumers of plastic, the United States has a critical role to play in solving this problem.” (Avi Kar, Senior Director, Toxics, Environmental Health, Natural Resources Defense Council, 7/6/24) [Urge the U.S. State Department to adopt a strong Global Plastics Treaty that reduces the production of plastics.](#)

Summer is a time of friend and family gatherings at barbecues, picnics, and other outdoor activities. But it doesn't have to include plastic waste. **Here are 5 tips to help you cut back on plastics and enjoy sustainable summer fun.**

1. Shop sustainability for party ingredients. Bring reusable bags and do your best to avoid items that come packaged in excess or unnecessary plastic.
2. Skip the single-use plates and cutlery and opt for reusable alternatives.
3. Ditch the plastic straws.
4. Say no to plastic bottles. Opt for beverages that come in aluminum cans or glass bottles.
5. Choose eco-friendly tablecloths and decorations. Try using natural materials such as flowers, leaves or branches to make centerpieces.

(Faye Park, President, *U.S. Public Interest Research Group*, 7/2/24)

GOOD NEWS for our parish! We now have a filtered water dispenser downstairs by the Community Room. No more need for plastic bottles at upcoming events. Thank you!

Comments on this column may be directed to the Social Justice Committee at socialjustice@holycrossphl.org.