



## STEWARDS OF OUR EARTH All of God's Creation

Social Justice Committee, Holy Cross Parish, Mt. Airy, May 19, 2024

### *Healing Our Throwaway Culture: A Focus on Plastics*

In 2015, Pope Francis exhorted us to take urgent action against climate change and to protect our common home. **During the week of May 19-26, we celebrate the 9th anniversary of *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis' encyclical letter on care for our common home.**

One major issue crying out for action is the rampant global use and waste of plastic. “A new study found **more than 4,000 chemicals linked to health and environmental risks in plastic products**.... Larger pieces break down into microplastics, and plastic can leach dangerous chemicals that have been linked to heart disease, cancer, decreased fertility, weakened immune systems, neurodevelopmental disorders, obesity, and high cholesterol.” (*U.S. PIRG* – Public Interest Research Groups, 4/29/24)

**But I recycle, you say.** For some time that seemed to be a helpful response, and in a small way it still is, but “for over 40 years now, the petrochemical industry has known that recycling would never be able to manage all of the plastic that it produced.... **Today, less than 10% of plastics disposed of in the United States are ever recycled**.... Instead of being recycled, the vast majority of single-use plastics that are produced end up being dumped into landfills and sent to incinerators. In either case, the plastics create dangerous air and water pollution, threatening both wildlife and human health.” (*Environmental Action*, 4/9/24)

**We must reduce our consumption and usage of plastic.** One way is to **eliminate the need for plastic bottles**. “One of the most common reasons we consume plastic bottles is to increase our consumption of *healthy* and *clean* water. Then when we are finished, we can just recycle the bottle. It seems like a win-win situation: we can consume clean water with little or no waste. This is actually not the case. In order to get some sense of what actually takes place in the life cycle of a water bottle and the environmental issues that are involved, [please watch the following video](#).” (*Mercy Tips to Care for the Earth*, 4/25/24)

**Today during Hospitality Sunday, stop by our table to consider some steps we can take to mitigate the plastic crisis.**

There is need for an effective cooperation between men and women of goodwill in assisting the ongoing work of the Creator...We cannot allow our seas and oceans to be littered by endless fields of floating plastic. Here too, our active commitment is needed to confront this emergency. ***We need to pray as if everything depended on God's providence and work as if everything depended on us.*** ~Message of his Holiness Pope Francis for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, September 1, 2018