



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

Social Justice Committee, Holy Cross Parish, Mt. Airy, May 26, 2024

### *Tips to Care for Our Earth*

This weekend concludes the week to celebrate the ninth anniversary of *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis' encyclical letter on care for our common home, but the work continues and each of us has a part to play. Sometimes it seems overwhelming, but we are not alone. **Together we CAN make a difference.**

If you had a chance to stop by our table last weekend to glean some ways to reduce your use of plastic, we thank you, and we thank those who are already taking steps to protect our earth from the harms that plastic causes to the environment and the health of humans and other creatures.

You can find some other helpful **tips to use as an individual** to reduce plastic use as well as other earth-saving tips at [Mercy Tips to Care for Our Earth](#) by the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. One tip is to think about and list the types of plastic products that you use regularly and attempt to prioritize them in terms of reducing or eliminating their use. [Watch this short video](#) for some useful information and motivation to act.

With more than one million plastic bags used every minute, the challenge seems daunting, but there are some solutions. **At the local and state level**, banning single-use plastic bags is a fairly straightforward one. “Just looking at bans already in effect in five states and cities [including Philadelphia] that cover roughly twelve million people, plastic bag bans are already saving more than six billion bags per year. That's enough bags to circle the earth 42 times...” (*Environment America*, 5/18/24)

“In November 2023, negotiators from over 170 nations agreed on a draft of **The UN Plastic Treaty**, which aims to be the first-ever international, legally binding treaty on plastic pollution. Treaty negotiators met again in April 2024 for more negotiations, with the goal of finalizing the treaty text by the end of 2024.

The draft treaty text was pushed through by the global south and island nations that are disproportionately impacted by plastics pollution. But the treaty still faces many obstacles. Debate centers on how the treaty will impact waste workers and how quickly we can reduce plastic production.” [Now is the time to insist that U.S. negotiators ensure a strong and enforceable treaty.](#) (*Catholic Climate Covenant*)

*Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home. Here I want to recognize, encourage, and thank all those striving in countless ways to guarantee the protection of the home which we share. — Pope Francis, Laudato Si' #13* (If you haven't had a chance to read the encyclical, [you can read it here.](#))

Comments on this column may be directed to the Social Justice Committee at [socialjustice@holycrossphl.org](mailto:socialjustice@holycrossphl.org).