



Healing Our Throwaway Culture: Focus on Plastics

Monday, April 22, 2024, is the 54th anniversary of Earth Day. The focus of this year's Earth Day is Planet vs. Plastics. Over the past 50 years, plastic production throughout the world has

doubled. We must deal with the plastic crisis if we are to control the climate crisis, to improve the health of our air and oceans, and to protect the earth's biodiversity and human health. In our Earth Day prayer let us focus on the plastics crisis and its impact on our earth and all who dwell within it. Let us pray that we may better respond to what Pope Francis calls "our throwaway culture."

Leader: Creator God, you made the world and sent your own Son to live among us, made of the same stuff, breathing the same air, marveling at sunrise and sunset just as we do.

All: Help us to participate in the life around and within us as your life, as you living in us and we living in you and in each other. God of love and life, restore us to your peace, renew us through your power. Teach us to love all that you have created and to care for our earth as your gift and our home.

A Reading from the Letter to the Romans.

Creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God. We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now; and not only that, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, we also groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that sees for itself is not hope. For who hopes for what one sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait with endurance.

Response: (Alternate sides or rotate)

Creation is waiting for us to open our eyes to the devastation in our world.

Creation is waiting for us to put the needs of the most vulnerable above the
greed of the powerful.

Creation is waiting for us to move from doing what is easy to doing what is right.

Creation is waiting for us to prioritize the needs of community over the convenience of self.

Creation is waiting for us to remove the pollution from our seas, land, air, bodies and hearts.

Creation is waiting for us to assume our roles as its servants and protectors.

With God's help, we will answer creation's call. Amen.

A reading from an address by Pope Francis.

Climate change ... calls us to base our actions on responsible cooperation on the part of everyone, for our world is now thoroughly interdependent and cannot allow itself to be divided into blocs of countries that promote their own interests in an isolated or unsustainable way. The wounds inflicted on our human family by ... climate change are comparable to those resulting from a global conflict, where the real enemy is an irresponsible behaviour that has profound consequences for every aspect of the lives of the men and women of today and tomorrow. A few years ago, some fishermen from San Benedetto del Tronto came to see me. In the space of just one year they had been able to remove twelve tonnes of plastic from the sea!

An immense and urgent challenge needs a cohesive and proactive response. This is an immense and demanding challenge, because it requires a change of course, a decisive shift in the current model of consumption and production, all too often entrenched in the "throwaway" culture that is indifferent towards both the environment and people. A group from the McDonald's Corporation told me that they have abolished plastic and use only recyclable paper, for everything... In the Vatican plastic has been banned, and I understand that we are now 93% plastic-free. These are steps, real steps that we have to continue. Real steps.

Pope Francis, To Representatives of the Green and Blue Festival on the 2023 World Environment Day, 5 June 2023

Reflection: What actions of mine can help to heal our Earth?
What real steps can I/we take to contribute to the reduction of plastic?



Leader: Let pray for an end to the waste and desecration of God's creation.

All: Loving God, give us the will and the courage to simplify the way we live, to reduce the energy we use, to share the resources you provide. Forgive our past mistakes and send us your Spirit, that we may act with wisdom vision for the future to which you call us in the name of Jesus. Amen.