

Healing Our Throwaway Culture: A Focus on Plastics

Commitments Handout

Take this list home and consider what further action/commitments you can take on a personal and community level.

Make a personal commitment

If you'd like to reduce your personal consumption of plastics, here are a few suggestions:

1. The first and foremost question in the spirit of Franciscan simplicity of living and poverty of possessions is, "Do I really need this product?" Be aware of personal WANTS versus NEEDS. Stop buying things you don't really need!
2. Purchasing decisions that reduce plastics:
 - Buy fruit and vegetables not packaged in plastic. Consider buying from local greengrocers or farmers' markets instead of supermarkets, and take your own fabric shopping bag.
 - Aim to purchase things in glass jars and bottles instead of plastic containers — i.e.: drinks, jams, spreads, vitamins, etc.
 - Think about buying bars of soap/shampoo — instead of plastic pump bottles. Purchase detergents in cardboard boxes.
 - Don't buy bottled water. Get a reusable steel water bottle and fill it from the tap.
 - Say no to single-use plastic, such as drinking straws, knives and forks, and plastic-lined drink cups.
 - Use loose tea leaves — most tea bags are sealed with plastic.
 - Refuse styrofoam food and drink containers. Urge your local municipality to ban them.
3. Replace plastic Tupperware with glass or steel containers and replace cling-film with Beeswax Wrap.
4. Reuse and give plastic packaging a new purpose. If you must buy a plastic bottle or a plastic container, reuse it instead of throwing it away.
5. Recycle plastics correctly. Look at the labels: #1 and #2 plastics are almost always recyclable, while #6 plastics aren't always accepted. Check with your local municipality to see what is locally accepted for recycling.
6. Share the [Plastic Pollution Treaty Petition](#) with friends, family, and community members.
7. Participate as an individual (and/or family) in [Plastic Free July](#).



Make a community commitment (parish, school, religious order, diocese, city, etc.)

If you would like your parish, school, religious order, organization, or city/municipality to reduce the consumption of plastics, here are a few suggestions:

1. Conduct a plastic audit (PlasticFreeJuly.com) to find out how much plastic you are throwing away.
2. Pledge to remove all single-use plastics from your parish, school, or religious community facilities by a certain date. Think about alternatives to plastic dinnerware (cups, plates, knives, spoons, and forks) and disposable plastic bottles. Find biodegradable or reusable/washable substitutes.
3. Install a water filter so people can refill their reusable water bottles.
4. Coffee cups: If your church, school, or organization serves coffee, encourage everyone to start bringing their own non-disposable cups. Have a “mug drive” and encourage everyone to donate one of their extras. Setting out the mugs on the table next to the coffee pot is an excellent way to reduce paper and plastic waste.
5. Plan a beach, stream, or park cleanup.
6. Refuse styrofoam/polystyrene food and drink containers.
7. Become a zero-waste church, school, or community! Check out ZeroWasteChurch.org for ideas and inspiration.
8. Watch EcoSpirit's (St. Joan of Arc Catholic Community in Minneapolis, MN) [zero-waste event video](#) to learn how one Catholic parish has stepped up and is responding to the need to heal our throwaway culture.
9. Participate as a community (parish, school, religious community, etc.) in [Plastic Free July](#).
10. Share the [Plastic Pollution Treaty Petition](#) with friends, family, and community members.

The lists come from Franciscan Seculars' [Plastic-Free Lent 2018 program](#)
and Catholic Climate Covenant's [Earth Day 2018 Program](#)

To access the Commitments Handout online
(and all of the links on it) go to bit.ly/ed24handout.

