

A LESS PLASTIC LENT

Making a Difference - Helping Creation - Using Less Plastic

St Francis of Assisi

"Francis' respect for Creation was not a duty or obligation but arose out of an inner love by which Creation and the source of Creation, namely God, were intimately united. All of Creation was a means to contemplate the power, wisdom and goodness of the Creator."

~ Ilia Delio OFS

Creation is Losing Its Shine

According to environmental research just 5% of the plastic we create is recycled, with a great deal of it ending up in the seas. It is said that 44% of sea birds ingest plastic, threatening their life, if not being totally responsible for their death. Marine mammals and fish suffer the same fate - and it is estimated that by the year 2050 the oceans will contain more plastic than fish.

Making a Difference

By evaluating our choices we can all play a part! Take part in the "Less Plastic Lent 2018 Challenge" and let it be the life-style catalyst for changing how we use single-use, throw-away plastics.



During Lent we reflect upon Christ's passion and how he gave himself to his Father's plan. It's a penitential season when our thoughts turn more to self-kenosis, being less of our own self and more Christ-like. We look upon Lent as a time of self-improvement and spiritual self-discipline. Or maybe deciding that it's time to review our not so healthy habits and remove the tastiness of chocolate from our diets!

In addition to our own Lenten spiritual practices Lent 2018 could be the catalyst to encompass our stewardship and ecology of our planet by remembering that every aspect of God's Creation seeks His nearness and goodness, and that Creation is filled not only with life giving air but with His Holy Spirit. God cares for us, as a mother does for her children and one way He expresses that love is in the wonder of our planetary home and those we share it with. We live as a community and our neighbours are an abundance of creatures whom sadly we sometimes forget.

Making a Difference:

This year make a personal pledge to take up the "Less Plastic Lent Challenge", talk about it and encourage our Island parishes to reduce our daily purchase and use of "single-use" or "throw-away" plastics. Or follow me on [Facebook](#) and [FranciscanSeculars.com](#) where during the next 40 days I'll share my discoveries of what's easy and what's difficult.

In our individual smallness we can each play a part to make a big difference to our planet.

From Creation to Christ

Saint Bonaventure, who wrote about the life of Saint Francis tells us that everything in Creation spoke to Francis of God. He came to see God's goodness in every aspect of Creation, so that everything ultimately led him to Christ. Christ is at the centre of Creation.



Our Bonds with all Living Creatures

"The Edenic relationships Francis came to share with all creatures emerged from his sense of justice. They signify that justice and peace are related to poverty, compassion, contemplation and on-going conversion by which we realise our familial bonds with all living creatures, joining with them on the journey." ~ Ilia Delio OFS

Saying No to Single-use, Throw-Away, Plastic:

So how can we help? How are we to help Creation live its natural wonder and holiness? First, let's get our thoughts focused on how Creation should be:

- 1) Read or listen to the [Canticle of the Creatures](#) and sense the filial relationship we have with all of Creation - Brothers and Sisters with each other and with every other aspect of Creation. Read too [Psalm 148](#) of how Creation sings praises
- 2) And watch the short video of our [Earth "breathing"](#).
- 3) Remember in Genesis our responsibility is to toil and keep Creation. We are here as stewards to protect and nurture every part of our blue planet.
- 4) Take a look at the [Lent 2018 page](#) on Isle of Wight Franciscan website for more information and to follow my progress.

If you'd like to get involved here's 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.
2. Purchase fruit and vegetables not packaged in plastic. Consider buying from local greengrocers instead of supermarkets, taking your own fabric shopping bag!
3. Purchase produce in glass jars and bottles instead of plastic containers - ie: drinks, jams, spreads, vitamins, etc.
4. Change your deodorant to one in a spray can or even consider recipes to make your own!
5. If purchasing butter say no to easy-spread butters in plastic containers.
6. Think about buying bars of soap - instead of soap in plastic pump bottles. For example Lush.com sell unwrapped soap and soap bars for hair.
7. Say no to single use plastic - such as drinking straws, knives and forks, and plastic lined drinks cups.
8. Purchase washing power in cardboard boxes
9. Use loose tea leaves - most tea bags are sealed with plastic.
11. Replace cling-film with Beeswax Wrap
12. Don't buy bottled water. Get a reusable water bottle and fill it from the tap.

If the above feels a little too intense start by reducing single use or throw-away plastic in one room of the house. Challenging rooms are the bathroom and kitchen!

God in Creation

"Saint Francis, faithful to Scripture, invites us to see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness. "Through the greatness and the beauty of creatures one comes to know by analogy their maker" (Wis 13:5); indeed, "his eternal power and divinity have been made known through his works since the Creation of the world" (Rom 1:20). For this reason, Francis asked that part of the friary garden always be left untouched, so that wild flowers and herbs could grow there, and those who saw them could raise their minds to God, the Creator of such beauty." ~ Pope Francis on 24/05/2015 from the Encyclical Letter Laudato Si'

Say Hello!

If you would like to find out more about St Francis and St Clare of Assisi and the Franciscan way of life - or if you would like to chat and meet with us - come along to one of our meetings held on the 1st Wednesday of each month from 3pm to 5pm at Our Lady and St Wilfrid's Church in Ventnor

For more information:

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[FranciscanHeart Facebook Page](#)

Prayer of St Francis

Most High, glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart and give me true faith, certain hope, and perfect charity, sense and knowledge, Lord, that I may carry out Your holy and true command.

Why not a Plastic Free 2018?



Lent 2018 is about purchasing much less single-use, limited-use and "throw-away" plastics. This is the type of plastic that causes the most harm to nature. It's not about living Plastic Free. It's about understanding the problem of throw-away plastics and evaluating our choices at the point we make a purchase.

A completely plastic free life is probably impossible. Plastic is part of our electrical wiring and sockets. It can be found in plumbing, windows and doors. It's in our white goods, cars, computers, mobile devices, kettles, TVs, Hoovers, MP3 Players, kitchen gadgets, clothing and the buttons on our shirts. It's used for irons, shaving equipment and hair dryers. Many baths are plastic, and plastic is an essential component of hearing aids, spectacles, and medical devices. Take a moment to think and you'll notice that plastic has become essential in some areas of life. It can be found in just about every room in every house, in hospitals, factories, and on boats, planes and trains. **So our focus must be not only on proper disposal of all plastics but to dramatically reducing the use of "un-necessary" single-use or throw-away plastics. These are the plastics strangling and suffocating God's Creation.**

Plastic has become so convenient, it's as though we've created another element, essential because of its versatility, low-cost and convenience. Yet the bacteria which breaks down organic material, returning it to the Earth and Creation, does not recognise plastic and so the plastic used in every toothbrush made since the 1920s, like the plastic bottles we use today, takes at least 450 years to degrade. Recycling is brilliant and good, it's necessary, but it doesn't address the problem at its source. Us and our use of plastic.

We're surrounded by throw-away plastic, we have allowed it, with silent stealth, to become integral to daily living - but with discipline of mind we can try our best - to help Creation smile a little more.

Photos:

St Francis Drawing - Sue Betanzos

Turtle - Jordi Chias Pujol

Hedgehog - Chris Packham & Lidl UK

Brighton Beach - Thomas Harvey

Compton Bay - Getty Images

Have we Forgotten?

Have we forgotten how to be good guests, how to walk lightly upon the earth as other creatures do? ~ Barbara Ward (1914-1981)
British Environmentalist

Compton Bay - Pollution



Make A Pledge!

We who have lost our sense and our senses - our touch, our smell, and vision. We who frantically make demands on Creation. We who live without rest for body, mind or soul, injuring ourselves and hurting our earth: we call a halt.

We want to rest. We need to rest and allow our planet to rest. We need to reflect and to rediscover the mystery who dwells within us. We must allow every form of life its own unhindered unique expression and we must learn again to see the artistry of God all around us.

We declare a Sabbath, a space for quietness; for simply being and letting be; for recovering the great, forgotten truths; for learning how to live again with Creation - with God beside us, within us and around us

✠ In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen

This Lent Make a New Personal Rule:



New Rule No 1 : Be part of caring for Creation - Let this Lent include personal and spiritual disciplines of making good changes to better share the world with all God's creatures.



New Rule No 2 : Any and every time you visit the beach or walk in the countryside pick up at least 5 pieces of plastic or spend 5 minutes collecting as much as you can and disposing of it properly. See it as a thing you just have to do if you want to enjoy nature. No-one else is going to do it, so all of us have to. It's not even that much of an effort. I think the above photo taken on Brighton Beach is of young Leopard Shark caught in plastic netting - just one unfortunate example of millions.

New Rule No. 3 : Respect all creatures, animate and inanimate, which "bear the imprint of the Most High," and strive to move from the temptation of exploiting Creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship. From the [Secular Franciscan Rule](#) - OFS - Rule 18.