

Shopping Sustainably and Responsibly

If we want to bring about deep change, we need to realize that certain mindsets do influence our behavior. Our efforts at education will be inadequate and ineffectual unless we strive to promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society, and our relationship with nature. Otherwise, the paradigm of consumerism will continue to advance, with the help of the media and the highly effective workings of the market. Laudato Si' #215

Here are some ways that you can help. Remember: **Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle.**

- 1. Reduce:** Consider buying items with recyclable packaging. The average American generates about five pounds of waste per day, and only around 10% of plastic placed in recycling bins gets recycled. So, whatever the product in question, the less you can use, the better.
 - For example, when eating out, when possible, don't use their styrofoam "take-home" boxes, but carry containers in your car from home to use. Also, when buying hot or cold beverages bring your reusable cup. If you cannot bring your cup, ask for a paper or biodegradable cup.
 - You might also skip getting paper receipts when shopping, thus avoiding extra paper and chemicals used for printing. Several stores, such as Lowe's, Home Depot, and Dicks Sporting will email you a receipt.
- 2. Reuse:** More than 60% of our litter consists of disposable items. Next time instead of throwing the item out try to sell or donate the item. Another way to cut down on waste is to use reusable shopping bags.
- 3. Recycle:** Check online with your local government to see what you can and can't recycle and recycle everything possible. For example, Davidson still recycles glass and empty spray can containers.
- 4. Buy some Reusable Mesh Produce Bags.** Grocery stores have those cheap plastic bags for our fresh fruits and vegetable products, but it is still plastic! These clear mesh bags come with a drawstring and can easily be washed in your laundry. If you do use plastic bags please make sure to recycle them. All grocery stores have receptacles to do so.

https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0711M2L88?ref=ppx_pop_mob_ap_share

- 5. Don't use plastic straws!** You know that these do not biodegrade and have been a big problem on our beaches. *Walmart sells Eco-Friendly and Reusable Silicone Straws (5 piece set)* that can be washed by hand and in your dishwasher. They come with a brush to clean the interior.
 - Another straw option, also available at Walmart, is "*Eco-Straws, Bio-based and Compostable*".
- 6. Carry single-use bags to pick up trash at our parish, in your neighborhood, on our streets, and beaches, and dispose of it properly.**
- 7. At our seafood restaurants and fish counters, let chefs, wait staff, and the folks behind our fish counters know that *sustainable seafood* is important to you.** Ask them if they know the source of what you are buying. Another issue that Catholics should be aware of is that the U.S. imports many products where slave labor and/or environmentally unsustainable practices are used. Ask your retailer not to buy products that use such practices.
 - **Here is a download a guide that you can download and take to the market with you to pick sustainable seafood choices:**

<https://www.seafoodwatch.org/seafood-recommendations/consumer-guides>

- 8. Reduce your carbon footprint.** Use mass transit, walk, bike, or carpool and find other ways such as insulating your home, buying energy-efficient appliances, replacing incandescent lights with LEDs to reduce your carbon footprint.
- 9. Prevent contaminated runoff.** No matter where you live, the runoff will affect your drinking water and ultimately the ocean. If possible, use organic fertilizers and pesticides instead of chemical fertilizers and pesticides on your lawn. On your driveway, avoid harmful cleaning products, and take care of spilled gasoline and oil. Return any used motor oil to a recycling center.
- 10.** Here are examples of some companies that support sustainable and green practices.
- ***Cariuma sneakers*** - made of sustainable materials and shipped in compostable boxes
 - ***Grove Collaborative*** - cosmetics and household cleaning products that use sustainable packaging and can be refilled
 - ***Blueland*** - *dish soap powder*. It comes in a recyclable paper pouch that can be refilled
 - ***Celestial Seasonings*** - *tea bags*, packaged in natural fiber bags that keeps more than 5.5million pounds of waste from landfills
 - ***Imperfect Foods*** - online grocer, delivers food in compostable cardboard boxes for up to 30% less than store prices.
 - ***Whole Foods*** has Animal Welfare rated meat and poultry which will let you know if the animals were treated humanely or not. Look for organic meat. Meat that is labeled organic is pasture-raised and does not have any growth hormones or antibiotics.
- 11. Buy organic produce.** Organic produce is grown without pesticides or chemical fertilizers.
- 12. If building or remodeling a home, look at windows and doors that meet the highest energy standards in the industry.** One such company is *Earthwise*. Energy-efficient appliances help save energy also!
- 13. Help combat slavery by buying Fair and Ethically traded products.** Look for the symbol on packages for products made using Fair Trade Labor Practices and that avoid Human Trafficking.

Below are examples of Fair Trade logos to look for when you shop:



14. The clothing we wear, especially the *demand for “fast fashion,”* has an unseen price on the lives of the workers and the environment. In the effort to produce clothes more cheaply and quickly, companies often turn to workers in underdeveloped nations, where they are paid unfair wages and may work in slave-like conditions that contribute to the cycle of poverty. In garment factories, children may be put to work at any or all stages of the supply chain, from the production of cotton to the yarn spinning, to the final cuts and sewing stages. The 2018 Stop Child Labor Coalition estimated that there are nearly 200 million child laborers throughout the world. Clothing production also creates a significant environmental impact, such as the massive amount of waste created as newer fashion trends push older ones into landfills.

The clothing industry is the second-largest consumer of water in the world after agriculture. It takes about 1800 gallons of water to produce one pair of jeans. This is roughly the average amount of water used by an American in 20 days. Dyes and harmful chemicals used in manufacturing are often toxic, not only for the workers but also for the environment, as the production waste is frequently discharged into the surrounding communities and area waterways, compromising sanitation and creating health risks to those living nearby.

So, how can we shop to promote the use of sustainable and ethical practices in the manufacturing of the clothes we wear and protect the people and places that produce them?

- **Buy Fair Trade, Ethically Sourced, or Organic.** Many companies have eco-conscious product lines and sustainability reports. Clothing made from synthetic fibers such as acrylic, nylon, polyester, coated finishes, and the stretchy parts of clothing are made from oil.
- **Buy secondhand clothing.** If everyone bought one secondhand item of clothing a year instead of new clothing, this would be the equivalent of taking ½ million cars off the road.
- **Keep your clothing longer.** The average American now generates 82 pounds of textile waste each year. Even keeping clothing for 9 months longer reduces the carbon footprint for that garment by 30%.

All parishioners are welcome to add to this list. Please send your suggestions to jbenson48@att.net.

Thank you for caring for Creation, the poor, and those suffering injustices around the globe.

AND - Vote Green! Urge your elected government officials and representatives to support Going Green and Contribute and/or Sign up to join a Conservation Group organization.