

Give Up Single-Use Plastic for Lent – and for Good!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
REMEMBER THE 4 Rs	FEBRUARY 2024	13	14 Start a green ministry at your church. Faith in Place can help: Faithinplace.org	15 Schedule a speaker on plastics at your church, school or club. Contact Sharon sharonstarr3@gmail.com	16 Attend local green fairs to learn more.	17 Reducing your plastic footprint is not hard. Be willing to change some habits.
18 REFUSE disposable plastic whenever possible.	19 Tell merchants you are avoiding single-use plastics.	20 At the grocery store, buy produce in bulk (unpackaged) and bring light-weight mesh bags.	21 Specify no straws, stir sticks or plastic cup lids when ordering beverages.	22 For carry-out, specify no plastic bags, cutlery, straws or containers (especially foam).	23 Don't buy items individually wrapped or in single-serving packets that don't need to be.	24 Thank merchants who offer eco-friendly products and packaging.
25 REDUCE your purchase of goods with excessive plastic packaging and parts.	26 Drink tap water (filtered if necessary) in a glass or reusable bottle.	27 Buy bar soaps, shampoos and conditioners instead of liquid.	28 Buy laundry detergent in powdered or sheet form packaged in cardboard/paper.	29 Put a wool dryer ball in your clothes dryer instead of dryer sheets.	MARCH 2024 1 Buy milk and juice in recyclable cartons or glass containers.	2 When buying clothes, opt for natural fibers. Synthetics contain plastic.
3 REUSE durable straws, utensils, bags, containers and other everyday items.	4 Reuse items you already own. Think carefully before purchasing new items.	5 Take reusable bags shopping. Keep them handy in your car.	6 Use reusable containers for food storage and box lunches.	7 Take reusable water bottles and travel mugs when you go out.	8 Keep a "go bag" in your car. Include containers for leftover food, utensils, straws, etc.	9 Bring your own mug to your favorite coffee or tea shop.
10 RECYCLE what you can't refuse, reduce or reuse.	11 Always put items loose in your recycle bin, never in bags.	12 Make sure items for recycling are clean.	13 Recycle plastic beverage bottles and containers. Most labeled 1 and 2 are recyclable.	14 To recycle caps and lids, put them back on containers to be recycled.	15 Many grocery stores collect plastic bags for recycling. They must be clean and dry.	16 Learn about your local recycling rules in Lake County at www.swalco.org .
17 Anything you can't find in stores is available online.	18 Look online for more information about reducing your plastic footprint.	19 Get active and join the Illinois Sierra Club Plastics Team sierraclub.org/Illinois/woods-wetlands	20 Join a local Go Green group or League of Women Voters green team: gogreenillinois.org , Lwv.org	21 Get training at Beyond Plastics (Bennington College): Beyondplastics.org	22 Advocate for green legislation with the Illinois Environmental Council: ilenviro.org	23 Support these and other environmental organizations.

Why it's so important to reduce our plastics consumption

- More than one-third of plastics are used once and thrown away.
- Many single-use plastics, such as straws and utensils, are not recyclable.
- Only about 6% of plastics are recycled in the US. More than 75% of plastics end up in landfills; the remainder are incinerated.
- Recycling helps but it's not a solution. Reducing demand for plastic is the answer.
- Plastic lasts thousands of years and wreaks havoc on ecosystems.
- Plastic waste is choking our oceans, lakes and rivers.
- An estimated 22 million pounds of plastic enter the Great Lakes each year; most of it ends up in Lake Michigan.
- Plastic in lakes and landfills does not disappear. It breaks down into microplastics that cannot be filtered out by water treatment plants. It contaminates our food and drinking water with toxic chemicals.
- Microplastics are in us. Studies have found them in breast milk, placentas, blood, organs and other human tissue.
- Plastics are 90% petroleum. The extraction and manufacturing industries are among the biggest polluters. The industry is promoting greater use of plastic to maintain its profits as oil consumption declines in favor of renewable energy.

Educational resources

- [The Story of Plastic](https://www.storyofstuff.org/movies/the-story-of-plastic-documentary-film/) documentary – <https://www.storyofstuff.org/movies/the-story-of-plastic-documentary-film/>
- PBS Frontline's [Plastic Wars](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/plastic-wars/) – <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/plastic-wars/>
- [Plastic Atlas](https://ps.boell.org/en/plastic-atlas): Facts and Figures About the World of Synthetic Polymers, Heinrich Boll Stiftung – <https://ps.boell.org/en/plastic-atlas>
- [The New Coal: Plastics and Climate Change](https://www.beyondplastics.org/plastics-and-climate), Beyond Plastics, October 2021 – <https://www.beyondplastics.org/plastics-and-climate>
- Rebecca Altman's article in the *Atlantic*, "[How Bad Are Plastics, Really?](https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2022/01/plastic-history-climate-change/621033/)", January 2021 – <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2022/01/plastic-history-climate-change/621033/>
- [Plastic: A Toxic Love Story](http://www.susanfreinkel.com/books/Plastic.html) by Susan Freinkel – <http://www.susanfreinkel.com/books/Plastic.html>
- [Plastic Unlimited: How Corporations Are Fueling the Ecological Crisis and What We Can Do About It](https://www.politybooks.com/plastic-unlimited/) by Alice Mah – <https://www.politybooks.com/plastic-unlimited/>
- [Thicker Than Water, The Quest for Solutions to the Plastic Crisis](https://islandpress.org/books/thicker-water) by Erica Cirino – <https://islandpress.org/books/thicker-water>
- David Sayer's [plastics wiki](https://www.notion.so/beyondplastics/Beyond-Plastics-Wiki-Home-05eab4ad73d1499aa41aa9a72c4bf6fd), an assemblage of easy-to browse information on all aspects of the plastic pollution crisis – <https://www.notion.so/beyondplastics/Beyond-Plastics-Wiki-Home-05eab4ad73d1499aa41aa9a72c4bf6fd>
- [The Plastic Chemicals Hiding in Your Food](https://www.consumerreports.org/health/food-contaminants/the-plastic-chemicals-hiding-in-your-food-a7358224781/) by Consumer Reports – <https://www.consumerreports.org/health/food-contaminants/the-plastic-chemicals-hiding-in-your-food-a7358224781/>

Questions?

Contact your fellow St. Lawrence parishioner Sharon Starr at sharonstarr3@gmail.com.