

“Planet vs. Plastics”

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The theme for 2024’s Earth Day sounds like Planet Earth is serious about confronting plastics. Rightly so, as I reflect on the years our Common Home has become “a wasteland full of debris”. (Laudato Si’) Plastics break down into microplastics, releasing toxic chemicals into our soil, water, and air. Eventually, these microplastics enter our bodies. We’re at the point of destroying our Earthly Home, lovingly given to us by our Creator.

Plastic and all its derivatives, like Polyester, caused the dilemma we’re in today. It is we, the inhabitants of Earth, who are responsible. In the 1950’s when we began using plastic for its convenience, I was thrilled my shampoo bottle would not break, no more cleaning up broken glass! *Now I use a Shampoo Bar.*

In the 1960’s and ‘70’s, our clothes were made from Polyester. We didn’t have to iron, just “wash and wear”. By the 1980’s people didn’t like polyester clothes, one reason, cheap looking. Solution? The clothing industry started to mix polyester with all kinds of “materials” creating numerous blends of fabric.

During the Movements “to save the trees”, Sten Gustaf Thulin created a reusable, durable plastic bag to replace the paper bags. In the mid 1960’s, plastic bags were spreading throughout Europe to save the environment. By the 1980’s, here in the U.S we were not only using plastic bags but throwing them away, even littering our environment.

For six million years, our ancestors have been “recycling”. Containers, homes, clothes were fashioned from natural materials, when no longer useful, returned to the soil to rot. *Did you know that only 1% of discarded clothes are being recycled during this “Fast Fashion” Era? Did you know that a high percentage of plastic polymers produced for packaging also generates the most waste?* To some degree, we can return to the Pre-Plastic Era by cutting out “single use” plastics and reducing all forms of it. In ways such as, “**Rethinking**” our needs, “**Refusing**” to buy on a whim, and creatively “**Reusing**” what we already have.

If we’re honest with ourselves, recycling hasn’t solved our “plastic” problems! *Did you know that some plastics are not recyclable?* I believe we need to “**refocus**” on our spiritual roots! Have we forgotten that we were made in the image and likeness of God! Do we really need all the things that we’re bombarded with? Yes, we’re “beautifully, wonderfully made”! *Ps. 139.* By reflecting on those awesome truths, our “wants” will be “**recycled**” into being more loving and caring toward self, others and our Common-Home! As responsible faith-filled people, let us spread the Good News, by word and action that we are One Family of God, thankful for our Home-Earth by lovingly caring for it, and one another!