

Earth Day 2018 Sunday 22 April

HELP END PLASTIC POLLUTION

Graphic: Paul Sableman/Flickr

Did you know that 300 million tons of plastic are sold every year, and that 90% of this is thrown away? Did you know that a huge portion of this ends up in our landfills and oceans, our wildlife and our bodies? Each segment of society bears responsibility for this. Large companies refuse to confront the issue of millions of plastic containers and bags that move through our economy every day. Governments are reluctant to face the health risks of plastic waste and are slow to ban single-use plastics and non-

Take some practical steps

Sisters of Mercy in New Zealand have identified a range of practical actions for themselves and their partners in ministry to adopt. These include:



Using honeywraps instead of plastic foil, to cover food in the fridge and to wrap sandwiches and other foodstuff. (Visit www.honeywrap.co.nz for details).

Using paper bags for household rubbish; wrapping rubbish in newspaper.

Placing used soft plastic in collection bins at supermarkets.

Using aluminium water bottles; buying these as gifts.

Using reusable fabric shopping bags, rather than one-off plastic bags.

Keeping string bags for buying vegetables and fruit.

Sitting down with others in the household to plan strategies for reducing plastic use.

recyclable products. And we are at fault in not making the break from single-use plastics, even though alternatives are now on the market. If enough of us get behind a global ban on single-use plastics, we can begin to heal our oceans and rivers, our wildlife and our children.

IN his encyclical *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis praises efforts to care for creation “through little daily actions” which he says can change the world.



Such things as avoiding the use of plastic, reducing water consumption, sorting and recycling rubbish, using public transport or car-pooling - “all these reflect a generous and worthy creativity which brings out the best in human beings.” When done for the right reasons, these practices “can be an act of love which expresses our own dignity... They can enable us to live more fully and to feel that life on earth is worthwhile.” (LS, par 211-212)