

Make Choices That Show We Care

“PLANET OR PLASTIC?” a recent article in National Geographic looks at our ubiquitous use of plastic. While this miracle material keeps hearts beating and planes in the air, 18 billion pounds of it ends up in the ocean each year. Animals are eating it, they are getting trapped in plastic and it is killing them. 114 species have been found to have microplastics in them. Although we may not yet know the full effect on our health, plastics have found their way into our food supply. According to The Guardian newspaper by 2050 the ocean will contain more plastic by weight than fish. Some other startling facts include: less than 1/5 of all plastic gets recycled, (at some point it all ends up in a dump somewhere as it can only be recycled so many times), virtually 1/2 of the plastic ever produced was made in the past 15 years and more than 40% is used once and then tossed! Plastic is cheap and has led to the creation of products we do not intend to keep.

Governments are taking notice. Plastics were on the agenda at the recent meeting of the G7 in Quebec. Five of the seven nations accepted the Ocean Plastics Charter which supports the search to find better ways to use more recyclable plastic, to ensure that more of it gets recycled, to replace plastic when possible with compostable products and to reduce the amount we waste. Corporations need to step up and do their part. We all do. It is said that it takes 22 gallons of water to make 1 pound of plastic. In fact it takes at least twice as much water to produce a plastic bottle as the amount of water contained in the bottle. What price are we willing to pay for convenience?

As Christians we know that God created the earth and all that is in it. We are called to be good stewards of this creation which provides in abundance for us all. Let's admit that our throwaway lifestyle is threatening the life of the planet. As Christians we know that we cannot say, what does it matter what I do I am just one person? Every little thing we do does matter. It matters to Jesus. So let us do those little things that we can do, such as, refuse the plastic bag, the plastic cutlery, take your own, take a reuseable straw, a travel mug for a drink, support government initiatives like the Ocean Plastics Charter (and the carbon tax) and look for and support corporations who consider the environment. For example IKEA intends to stop selling single-use plastic products and remove them from their restaurants by 2020. Let each one of us take a good look at our lifestyle which is made so much easier by the use of single use plastic products. As we continue to use more than our share of earth's resources let us consider what effect this is having on all life on this planet and find ways to do better.

The Diocesan Green Group hopes to host a workshop on plastic. If you would like to speak with members of the Diocesan group, we invite you to visit our display at synod in November or contact us anytime at greengroup@ontario.anglican.ca.

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