

Shopping for the Planet



**Learning to use our influence as
purchasers for a better world**

*Inspired by Pope Francis'
book 'Laudato Si' (2015)*

Words & photos
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Awareness

Pope Francis states that “a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach.....so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor”.

(Laudato Si, Australian Edition, 2015, p. 44)



Photo: Science photo.com

Period of Deep Crisis

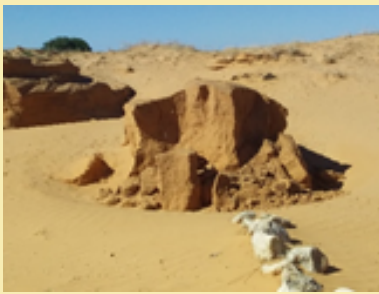
He states that we are in a “period of deep crisis which requires bold decisions”. He states that we “are tempted to think that things do not look that serious, and the planet could continue for some time”.

(Laudato Si, Australian Edition, 2015, p. 52)

Millions of people are living in poverty.

Our planet, too, is crying out for help - impoverished.

Both need our attention and action urgently. We can do something about both.



(Photo: Peter Henry, Moorlands, South Australia June 2021)

Simple Actions in the Supermarket

One small action we can take is taking care in the way we choose our products when shopping.

Many people have been doing this already for many years.

This little booklet is to remind us why we're doing it and to share a few ideas about how we can do more.

Perhaps others will think about taking on this small action too.



Buying Paper

We know that our use of paper requires trees to be cut down. It is a sharp reminder to us to see the many huge piles of logs waiting at a port to be shipped away!

We can wonder if the tree growth can keep up with our usage of paper.

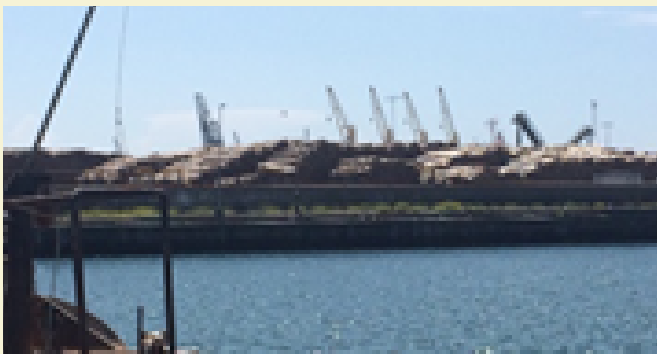


Photo by Luke Henry, Portland, South Australia, January 2021

Sustainable forests

The forests planted in the south west of Victoria and south east of South Australia are replacing some of the trees cut down.



From Laudato Si: “...nature as a whole not only manifests God but is a locus of his presence” (p. 75).

Sustainably Sourced paper

Paper products made from some forests are labelled “sustainably sourced” or “from responsible sources”.

Paper products with the sign shown here do less damage to the planet .



Products from recycled paper

There are paper products made from recycled paper. For example: Toilet paper, tissues, paper towels, serviettes exercise books, printing paper, note pads.



Disposable plates & cups

Plastic plates, cups and bottles are still available to buy.

Plastic products will stay in the environment for hundreds of years. They are polluting our waterways and seas.



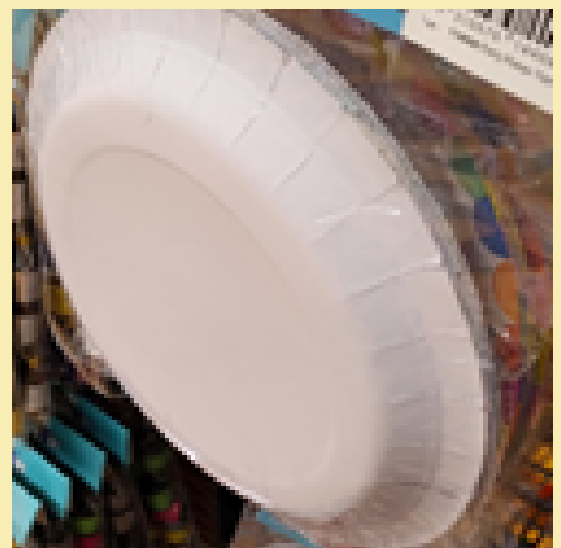
(Photo source: 'The Conversation' – 28.11.13. Story by Julia Reisser & Charitha Pattiaratchi from University of Western Australia)

From Laudato Si: "...we all generate some small ecological damage....to commit a crime against the natural world is a sin against ourselves, and a sin against God".

p. 14

Alternatives to Plastic

There are alternatives to plastic plates – such as products from paper or bamboo. These are more sustainable for the planet. We can also use firmer plates from home.



Which cups will you choose for the planet?

Plastic cups



Paper cups



Bamboo alternative

Bamboo products are more readily available now.

Bamboo is generally seen to be a sustainable resource. It is fast growing and it regrows from its roots. It doesn't require fertilizer. It can be fully grown in 3-4 months. These products might cost a little more initially but can be re-used. We can find out the stores near us that sell these products.



Packaging

Another consideration in our shopping is packaging.

Plastic packaging is adding enormous volume to our rubbish. Some of it can be recycled. Much of it can't.

Even in recycling plastic, the strain to manage this is increasing. For example China no longer takes our plastic for recycling.



Packaging Alternatives

There are ways to try to reduce packaging in our purchases. This can take time.

For example – buying our meat from a butcher, wrapped in butcher's paper, instead of in the packaged meat section of the supermarket.



Other alternatives to heavy packaging.

Instead of purchasing:

- Cakes in heavy plastic
- Nuts in heavy plastic
- Apples in heavy plastic
- Milk and juice in heavy plastic

We can choose:

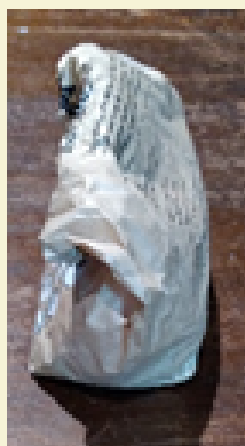
- Cakes in less packaging
- Nuts from self serve.
- To put apples in a paper bag or bring our own bag.
- To buy milk and juice in cartons.

Which item would you choose?

Milk in a carton or milk in plastic?



Tomatoes in packaging or put tomatoes in a paper bag?



Plastic bags

It's hard to avoid plastic bags.

We use them for fruit and vegetables, bin liners, sandwich bags, and many more purposes.

There are usually paper bags in the vegetable section (near the mushrooms). These are easier to recycle. They can be used for other fruits and vegetables.



Cling wrap, Alfoil, baking

Some stores now have biodegradable products. These include the "Greener" brand and other 'Eco' brands.

These are advertised as being more sustainable alternatives for:

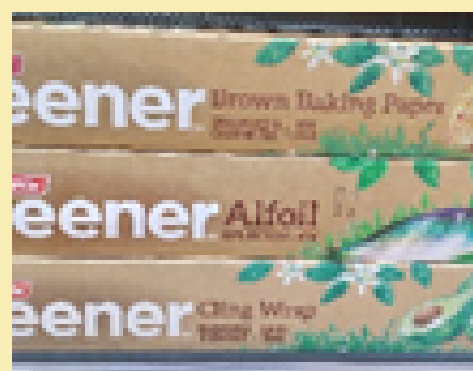
Cling wrap

Alfoil

Baking paper

Sandwich bags

Bin liners



Other Biodegradable Plastic Products

Bin liners



Sandwich bags



Managing plastic bags and wrapping

Most of us have soft plastics collecting in the home.

Many stores now provide a collection point for returning plastics.

Some research puts doubts on whether this is then managed well from the collection point site.

It is a start though!

Another alternative is to take the soft plastics to a recycle station. Having that bag of bags under the sink is worthwhile!



Other considerations: SOAP

Do we really need the soap to be in a plastic bottle?

Would a soap bar be ok?



Why Palm oil?

PALM OIL

Scientists tell us that palm oil is taking the natural habitat from orangutans and other primates. They are declining in number.

We can look for soaps that don't include palm oil. That's another small action we can take.



Fair Trade

Some products we buy at the shops are prepared by people in countries where there are limited workers' rights.

One way to assist such workers and their families is to look for the 'Fair Trade' symbol.

Fair Trade products claim to offer fair pay for the workers and better conditions.

Products include: coffee, and chocolate products – such as drinking chocolate.



We can make a difference!

Imagine if we could make a few small changes just in our choices when shopping!

We can make a difference to the health of our planet and fairness to some workers in poorer countries.

Let's do it!

***An initiative prepared by Council for Integral Ecology
To order more copies email
events@adelaide.catholic.org.au***