

Mother Earth Is Asking Us for Help! *How Is Plastic Made?*

The Season of Creation spans five weeks between the *World Day of Prayer for the Care for Creation* (September 1) and the *Feast of St. Francis of Assisi* (October 4). This “time for creation” offers, in the words of Pope Francis, “individual believers and communities a fitting opportunity to reaffirm their personal vocation to be stewards of creation, to thank God for the wonderful handiwork which he has entrusted to our care, and to implore his help for the protection of creation as well as his pardon for the sins committed against the world in which we live.”

Read the Season of Creation bulletin here: <http://usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/environment/upload/WDPCC-Bulletin-Insert.pdf>

What’s the Issue?

In light of the Season for Creation and our focus on plastics this year, let’s learn **How Is Plastic Made?**

(<https://www.wisegeek.com/how-is-plastic-made.htm>)

- The main types of raw materials used to make plastic are **fossil** products such as **crude oil** and **natural gas**. These contain compounds called hydrocarbons that can be used to make monomers which can then be processed to make plastic.
- This is usually done by **cracking**, in which the hydrocarbons are either heated to extreme temperatures or chemically treated to break them down into monomers like **ethylene** or **styrene**.
- Once the monomers are extracted, they have to be chemically treated to make them bond together and form long polymer chains. The monomers are mixed with another chemical that acts as a catalyst and causes them to combine with each other, forming a **resin**.



Conclusion: The making of plastic is hurting our environment by extracting crude oil and natural gas through cracking, eventually forming a resin. When this plastic resin is discharged, it contaminates our waterways.

Acting on Our Corporate Stand: What Can We Do to Help?

- Visit wisegeek.com to learn more about the making of plastic and the effects on Mother Earth.
- It’s not enough just to recycle plastic. We must eliminate plastics by finding sustainable alternatives.

Resources:

<https://www.wisegeek.com/how-is-plastic-made.htm>

<https://happyhealthymama.com/25-ways-to-use-less-plastic.html>;

www.catholicclimatemovement.global; www.seasonofcreation.org



The Season of Creation: September 1 – October 4

The Season of Creation spans five weeks between the **World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation** (September 1) and the **Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi** (October 4). This “time for creation” offers, in the words of Pope Francis, “individual believers and communities a fitting opportunity to reaffirm their personal vocation to be stewards of creation, to thank God for the wonderful handiwork which he has entrusted to our care, and to implore his help for the protection of creation as well as his pardon for the sins committed against the world in which we live.” Below are some ways to live out these three dimensions of Pope Francis’ call, both as individuals and as a community.

Care for Creation in Action

In 2017 the Diocese of Burlington, Vermont celebrated a Year of Creation. The Year included creation-themed liturgies, a Catholic school’s ecological awareness and action project, an ecological justice conference and an initiative to “Laudato Si’ by your Actions.” To learn more, please visit bit.ly/XOCC-VT.

“The ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion.”
—Pope Francis
Laudato Si’, no. 219

1. Reaffirm Our Vocation as Stewards of Creation

As individuals and families: Counteract the “throwaway culture” in *Laudato Si’*. Pope Francis brings attention to our “throwaway culture,” which “quickly reduces things to rubbish” (no. 22). In your daily life, try to identify the ways in which you can choose reusable, rather than disposable, such as coffee mugs, reusable bags, or cloth napkins, and commit to making one change during this month.

As a community: Educational Program Use the educational program “Befriend the Wolf” from the Catholic Climate Covenant to reflect on our vocation as stewards of creation. The program is designed to help your community contemplate the connections between all creatures under God our Creator. Visit bit.ly/CCC-BTF to access this resource.



2. Thank God for His Wonderful Handiwork

As individuals and families: *Meal Prayer* Before and after meals, say a short prayer of thanksgiving for the living food that sustains and nourishes us. Briefly consider how all nourishment ultimately comes from the earth, and give thanks for all the human hands that helped bring this food to your table. May we recognize, as *Laudato Si’* has taught us, that this “moment of blessing, however brief, reminds us of our dependence on God for life” (no. 227).

Pope Francis, “Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis For the Establishment of the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation,” September 1, 2015.

