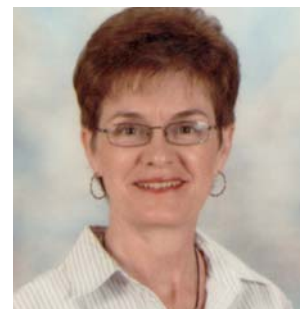


THE USE OF STYROFOAM DISPOSABLE WARE AND THE CONSEQUENCES



Judy Lewis
National Chairperson of Education and Health

Disposable ware made of expanded polystyrene foam (popularly called Styrofoam) poses health risks to humans and is non-biodegradable.

Polystyrene disposable ware is made from styrene, a petroleum product shown to have adverse health effects on occupationally-exposed workers and on consumers who utilize it. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency states that health hazards for workers can be acute.

Chronic effects for both workers and consumers can be in the form of headaches, fatigue, weakness, depression and central nervous system dysfunction (e.g. reaction time, memory speed, intellectual function). There are also reproductive and developmental health effects such as spontaneous abortion. Lung tumours have been observed in the offspring of orally exposed mice. Styrene also shows possible carcinogenicity to humans.

The leaching of styrene into the body through a cup of coffee, for example, can be 0.025%. If you drink two cups of coffee per day for three years, you have consumed as much as a

cup of styrene. Hot, fatty, acidic or alcoholic beverages increase the rate of leaching.

In addition to the unfavourable health effects to humans, polystyrene is non-biodegradable. Because it is so difficult to recycle, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency states: "Each year American[s] throw away 25,000,000,000 Styrofoam cups. Even 500 years from now, the foam coffee cup you used this morning will be sitting in a landfill."

SUGGESTED ACTION PLAN

1. Post this notice in every parish and Catholic school kitchen: "We are called to be stewards of God's creation. Please use cardboard when using disposable ware (i.e. plates and cups). Please do NOT use Styrofoam, as it is a health hazard and is non-biodegradable. By request of your CWL. Thank you."
2. All members should discontinue use of Styrofoam disposable ware and educate others concerning this matter.

Thank you to B.C. & Yukon Provincial Council for providing this information. †

GOD WORKS IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS

Monique Duval-Lavallee
St. Boniface Diocesan 1st Vice-President and Chairperson of Organization

Several years ago, my father-in-law remarried and the woman he married (Gillian) was a non-Catholic. After a while, we got to know each other and I invited her to my parish council's annual communion brunch. She enjoyed herself and wanted to be more involved with the council. I started bringing her to meetings and, throughout the years, she continued to help and always attended the brunch.

As time passed she became very active within the council, even attending diocesan and provincial conventions. Since she was non-Catholic she was not able to hold office on the executive but she always helped with all activities and did her fair share of the work.

Then two years ago she shocked me when she asked me to be her sponsor in the Rite of Christian Initiation (R.C.I.A.) program. Needless to say, I was not only proud of her and delighted to be her sponsor, but I was also amazed that she had

come to this decision on her own; no council members had coaxed her into it. We had accepted her into our group as she was and for whom she was.

We completed the R.C.I.A. program side by side, I learning as much as Gillian. Last Easter, Gillian stood before family and friends (several of them council members) and took her oath to become and lead her life as a Catholic.

This year, Gillian accepted the position of president for a two-year term. God and Our Lady move in mysterious ways with plans for our future that we aren't aware of. I am truly blessed to have Gillian as a member of our council, as my mother-in-law, and as a very true friend. Together we continue to grow and learn, and do good work for the Catholic Women's League, and to help wherever we can and whenever we can.

With permission from Gillian Lavallee. †