

THE ABUSE OF PLASTIC BAGS THE HIGH COST OF CONVENIENCE



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Well over a billion single use plastic bags are given out for free each day. Those bags come at a very high cost to the environment and society. Since they were introduced in the 1970s, plastic bags have infiltrated our lives. Globally, we carry home between 500 billion and one trillion every year; about 150 for every person on earth. Billions of these plastic bags end up as litter. While they may be hygienic, odourless, waterproof and a convenient way of carrying goods, they are environmentally unsound.

Plastic bags can have a devastating effect on wildlife. Estimates are that, worldwide, thousands of whales, birds, turtles and seals die every year from eating discarded plastic bags mistaken for food. On land, many cows, goats and other animals suffer a fate similar to marine life when they accidentally ingest plastic bags while foraging.

Recycling will not solve this problem. Recycling rates for plastic bags are extremely low. Only one to three percent of plastic bags end up being recycled. The economics of recycling plastic bags is not efficient. The process of sorting, the contamination of inks and the overall low quality of the plastic used in plastic bags makes recycling them economically unviable.

Many bags collected for recycling never get recycled. A growing trend is to ship them to other countries, which are rapidly becoming the dumping ground for the western world's recyclables. Rather than be recycled, they are cheaply incinerated under more lax environmental laws.

Plastic bags may not be the most adverse problem facing the environment, however, they are everywhere and involve a real cost to society. High costs are paid for the non-renewable resources required and for the damage done to the environment to obtain the petroleum and natural gas required for production.

The toxic chemical ingredients needed to make the plastic produce pollution and the energy needed to manufacture and transport disposable bags eats up more resources and contributes to global warming.

While retailers give the bags away "free," these costs are passed on through higher merchandise prices.

In a landfill, plastic bags take up to 1,000 years to degrade. As litter, they break down into tiny bits, contaminating soil and water. Collection, hauling and disposal of plastic bag

waste create an additional environmental impact, putting an unnecessary burden on diminishing landfill space and causing air pollution if incinerated.

Members can make a difference! Please promote the use of cloth bags and/or tote boxes.

Thank you to Ontario Provincial Council for providing this valuable information. †

HOLY CROSS PARISH COUNCIL BURNABY, BRITISH COLUMBIA



This year was a time of great joy for the Archdiocese of Vancouver – it had five priests ordained in one year! This great joy was carried one step further because, at Holy Cross Parish, one of those five ordinations was "theirs" – Father Alessandro Lovato, son of League member Gemma Lovato.

Fr. Alessandro was born in Vancouver and is the eldest of four children. He and his family are true extensions of the parish family, not only being strong in their faith, but also visible in support of parish life.

Before his ordination, Fr. Alessandro was asked about the reason for his vocation and his response was, "that God wants me to be His priest so that others might know how much He loves them." Does this not reflect the former League theme *companions on the journey* and the parish theme *With hopes in our Heart* – where all journey together toward the Lord with hope to do good deeds on their way?