

Service

May 8, 2024



Communiqué #06

Here I am Lord, send me!

FOR: Provincial Chairpersons of Service
THROUGH: Provincial Presidents and Secretaries
CC: National Executive (for information)
National Life Member Liaison
FROM: Joline Belliveau, National Chairperson of Service

Canadians “ingest a credit-card weight of plastic every week... with a vague understanding of the ‘inflammation’ it may be inflicting in [their] bodies. In a world’s regrettable first, Italian researchers found particles of microplastic in the placenta of pregnant women and in their [unborn child]” (The Georgia Straight).

According to the United Nations Environment Programme, “Since 1950, approximately 9.2 billion tonnes of plastic have been produced, resulting in the generation of some 6.9 billion tonnes of primary plastic waste. More than three-quarters of this plastic waste was discarded and ended up in landfills, dumps, uncontrolled or mismanaged waste streams, or the natural environment, including the oceans. Currently, it is estimated that 19-23 million tonnes of plastic leaks into aquatic ecosystems annually—from lakes to rivers to seas—from land-based sources. Exacerbated by contributions from sea-based sources, this combined plastic leakage is having major impacts on ecosystems, economies and society—including on human health. Addressing plastic pollution is therefore an urgent action.”

One study found that products of some well-known companies significantly pollute the environment, including Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Danone and Nestle. These companies were identified in a clean-up group, where garbage picked up was recorded as it was collected. Much of the plastic collected could not be identified.

During the week of April 23–29, 2024, the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) on Plastic Pollution took place in Ottawa, hosted by the federal minister of the environment. The committee’s goal is to create an international treaty on plastic pollution, with 176 countries working on the treaty.

Previous committee sessions were held in Uruguay in November 2022, Paris in June 2023 and Nairobi in November 2023. The final session will be held in the Republic of Korea in November 2024. Among the issues discussed include:

- The need to develop non-harmful and recyclable plastics.
- Eliminating materials used that are harmful.
- The difficulty of recycling plastics that are made up of several layers of different plastics.
- Ending plastic pollution by 2040.

Packaging is one of the primary global applications that use plastic due to its versatility, durability, low cost and lightweight properties—making up a considerable share of the total plastic production. In 2022, the global plastic packaging market was valued at more than \$265 billion (USD).

To take a stand against plastic consumption, please ask your diocesan counterparts to encourage members to purchase foods and groceries with less packaging than others. For example, instead of purchasing pre-chopped, plastic-wrapped watermelon slices, find the whole, non-packaged watermelon and slice it at home. With mindful purchasing, members can help influence what grocers buy, informing stores that Canadians don't want plastic packaging.

Ideas for Members

- Use reusable products like mugs, food containers and shopping bags.
- Refuse cutlery, straws and individual packets when ordering food for delivery or takeout if it is not needed.
- Buy plastic products that can be reused, recycled, repaired or repurposed.
- Support businesses that are reducing their plastic footprint.
- Learn about what can be recycled or composted locally.
- Choose plastic products that are recyclable and participate in local waste programs.
- Wash and reuse plastic containers and resealable plastic bags.
- Put a lid on bins to stop litter from being blown away or scattered by animals.
- Throw cigarette butts in the garbage or designated bins.
- Organise or join a neighbourhood clean-up.
- Check out [Shoreline Cleanups](#).

Your sister in the League,



Joline Belliveau
National Chairperson of Service