

## The Presentation Congregation responds to the Challenge of Sustainable Living

Since its foundation by Nano Nagle in 1775, the Presentation congregation, which was established to redress the lack of education available to the poor in Ireland, has over the years, constantly adapted to address current needs. At its congregational gatherings in the last ten years, there has been a growing consciousness of the profound interaction between contemplation, action for justice and reverence and care for the earth. The words in the Earth Charter

*'We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society ... declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life and to future generations'*

have been ringing loud and clear in the ears of Presentation Sisters. In 2007, a **Sustainable Living Task Group** was set up to promote ways in which we can live more sustainably. They have drawn up a nine month programme which can be used by individuals or groups in their own place. It is hoped that this initiative will engage a wide network of people who will enter into the spirit and practice of living sustainably.

The birthplace of Nano Nagle at Ballygriffin, Mallow, Co. Cork has been designated to be a *Centre for Heritage, Spirituality and Ecology*. While all Presentation people engage with the challenge to live sustainably, it is here that it is undertaken in a special way. The 32 acres of land at Ballygriffin have been farmed organically since 1999. The produce is used at the Centre with the surplus being sold locally and at the Killavullen Farmers' Market. *'Reduce, reuse, recycle'* has become a natural way of life for the staff and community at the Centre. Open days and courses are offered on an on-going basis to support and encourage all who wish to engage in this way of life.



Birthplace of Nano Nagle, now The Nano Nagle Centre, Ballygriffin, Mallow, Co. Cork

In 2007, the Centre has been refurbished to the best environmental and sustainable standards. The Centre now uses geothermal heating, solar panels, passive solar heating and wood pellet boiler. It has environmentally friendly forms of insulation and damp-proofing; Argon gas in the double-glazed windows; a heat recovery system where heat is removed from outgoing air and transferred to incoming air. A reed-bed system has been installed to cater for the treatment of waste water. These developments not only enhance the Centre but are also a firm statement of our commitment to caring for the earth, and all its life forms.

While the Nano Nagle Centre will be a valuable resource; a place where Nano's story and vision are shared, a place where peace, tranquility and prayer are found and the interconnectedness of all life is celebrated and nurtured, this sustainable living programme is a practical tool for people who wish to be more eco-friendly in their lifestyle.

*'We commit ourselves to 'a spirituality of being in communion, that seeks God in the interconnectedness of the whole of creation and empowers active love for self, others and all of creation and to move towards ways of living that enable social justice and sustainability..... This spirituality draws us to reverence and nurture the cosmos, earth and its peoples, particularly where these are most wounded.'* (Presentation Sisters Congregational Gathering 2006.)

*Members of the Presentation Sustainable Living Task group: Paula Buckley, Imelda Carew, Ciss Geoghegan, Emer Madigan, Howard Marshall, Maureen O'Connell.*

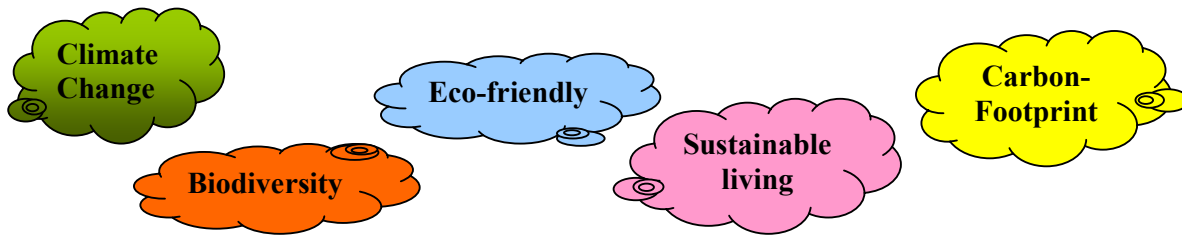
### Further information:

Nagle Community, 55 Kirwan Park, Mountmellick, Co. Laois. Tel./Fax 057 8644005 Email: [presnagle@jmin.iol.ie](mailto:presnagle@jmin.iol.ie)

**This document is the property of the Presentation Sisters. Written permission must be sought for its use and, where granted and used, the source must be referenced – [presnagle@jmin.iol.ie](mailto:presnagle@jmin.iol.ie)**

# SUSTAINABLE LIVING PROGRAMME

## Overview



The above words have become common phrases for all of us over the past few months, especially since the publication of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report.

We are well aware that we can no longer ignore the possible negative consequences of our unsustainable lifestyle, as it impacts not only on ourselves and our world but also on future generations.

*'Ireland is the 5<sup>th</sup> most climate-polluting country in the world per person, overshooting our Kyoto limit by a factor of two. We produce more waste per person than any other EU country. If everyone consumed and polluted like the Irish, we'd need the resources of 3 planet Earths.'*

(Oisín Coghlan, Friends of the Earth, in Irish Times, 6 July 2006)

**This programme aims to:**

- **Call us to recognise the beauty and wonder of this world and celebrate its diversity**
- **Alert us to the devastation currently happening to our planet**
- **Increase our awareness that climate change, which is mainly caused by humans, has the greatest impact on those who are already the most deprived in our world**
- **Motivate us to play our part in living and promoting more sustainable lifestyles so that we and future generations can enjoy the beauty and fertility of our planet Earth**
- **Develop a network of people for mutual support and encouragement as we strive to live in a more environmentally friendly manner.**



Which do we choose?  
beauty/wonder  
or  
destruction?



**THE FUTURE IS IN OUR HANDS**

## Design of the programme

The programme is designed in a user-friendly manner for use as an individual, in the home, or as a member of a group.

- It runs over a nine-month period (approx)
- Each month the focus is on a different aspect of sustainable living.
- Enclosed in this folder is an information/action leaflet on the following topics: energy, water, purchasing, transport, organic produce, green cleaning and waste.
- Each leaflet contains information and suggestions for action on each topic.
- As you engage with a topic, you are invited to:
  - take time to become aware of your place in the world, its beauty and wonder and the duty of care with which we are entrusted. (Sample reflection enclosed in the folder)
  - read the information leaflet, get in touch with the reality being highlighted, and decide on your plan of action for the month.

All who are on our mailing list will receive notification of workshops that may be taking place and further leaflets if they become available.

**Contact: Nagle Community, 55 Kirwan Park, Mountmellick Co. Laois.**

**Tel/Fax 057 8644005**

**Email: [presnagle@jmin.iol.ie](mailto:presnagle@jmin.iol.ie)**

**THE FUTURE IS TRULY IN OUR HANDS**

The *Preamble to the Earth Charter* has stated very clearly the point that we have reached in our struggle to live sustainably and calls us to recognise our collective responsibility:

*We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise.*

*To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms, we are one human family and one Earth Community with a common destiny.*

*We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice and a culture of peace.*

*Towards this end, it is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life and to future generations."*

## Humanity's Footprint

In 2003, **humanity's footprint** exceeded the Earth's biological capacity by over 25%. The ecological footprint of a country, region or of the world calculates to what extent humans utilize natural resources. The size of the footprint varies from country to country, with the Western World far exceeding its rightful proportion. This is partly due to a consumerist mentality which is often equated with economic success.

The concept of development recognises that human living, material well-being and economic activity must continue and grow but they must be managed and controlled in a way that respects the environment and uses natural resources in a sustainable way.

Sir Nicholas Stern, in his "Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change", October 2006, warns that if we continue with business as usual, then in the course of the present century the sudden shifts in regional weather patterns will threaten the livelihoods of tens of millions of people; there will be increased deaths from disease and malnutrition and there is a possibility that up to 200 million people may become displaced by rising sea levels.

There will be serious risks of violent conflicts in vulnerable areas of the world and of major disruption to

economic and social activity on a scale similar to that experienced during the two world wars.

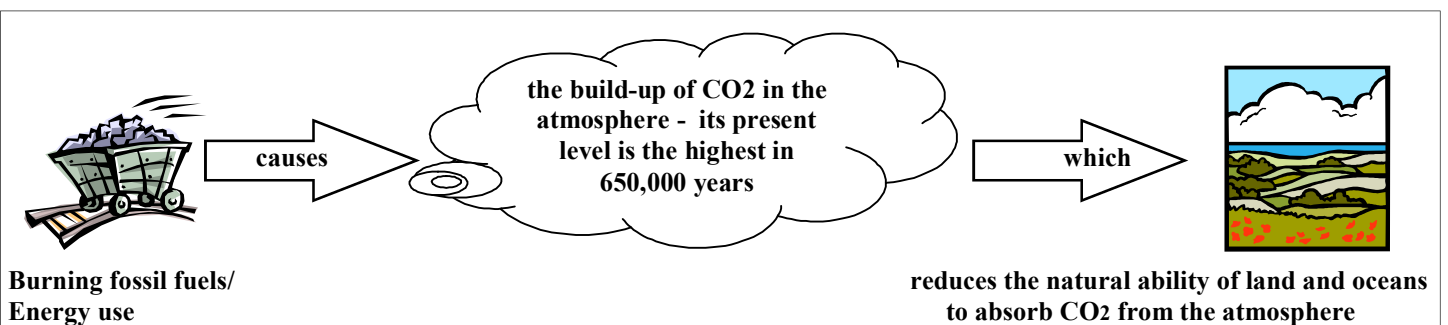
Joanna Macy, in *Earth News* 2002, speaks of the urgent need for an 'epochal shift from an industrial society dependent on accelerating consumption of resources' to a sustainable or 'life-sustaining' society and she reminds us: "There is no guarantee that we will make it in time for civilisation or even complex life-forms to survive; but it is clear that there is no alternative, because now we are, in system terms, 'on runaway', consuming our own life support system"

*'business as usual will threaten the livelihoods of tens of millions of people'* Sir N. Stern

## Traditions remind us of our responsibilities

### Native American tradition

Chief Seattle wrote 'The Earth does not belong to man: man belongs to Earth. This we know. All things are connected like the blood which unites one family. All things are connected. Whatever befalls the Earth befalls the sons and daughters of the Earth. Man does not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. What he does to the web he does to himself. The Earth is precious to God and to harm the Earth is to heap contempt upon its Creator.'







## Faith-keeper of the Onondaga peoples in the USA, Oren Lyons tells us:

‘In our way of life, in our government, with every decision we make, we always keep in mind the Seventh Generation to come. It is our job to see that the people coming ahead, the generations still unborn, have a world no worse than ours – and hopefully better. When we walk upon Mother Earth we always plant our feet carefully, because we know the faces of our future generations are looking up at us from beneath the ground. We never forget them.’

### Our Celtic /Irish Tradition

We would do well also to look at our Celtic / Irish tradition and learn from it. With its core belief in the sacredness of the earth, embodied as it is with the Divine Presence, this tradition can empower us to recover a reverential attitude to earth, an attitude largely trivialized or lost in our time. If we could enter into an understanding of the mind-set of our own ancestors, recover some of the wisdom of a people who lived in harmony with the natural world, we might learn for ourselves to enter into right relationships with each other as humans and with our natural world.



The notion of ‘domination’ arose from a misinterpretation of Genesis 1: 28 which has become so much part of our modern-day consciousness, but was quite alien to the Celts / Irish. They preferred to take their text from Christ: “as long as you did it to one of these my least brothers you did it to me” and to apply it to the ‘more than human’ - birds, animals and insects – the most vulnerable of God’s creatures, as well as to the weakest and least powerful among the human part of creation.

### Our Christian Tradition

The goods of the earth are gifts intended by the Creator not only for the benefit of every person but of every

species. There is a ‘social mortgage’ that guides our use of the world’s goods and we have a responsibility to care for these goods, not as mere consumers and users, but as trustees. How we treat the environment is a measure of our ‘stewardship’ - a sign of respect for the Creator. True stewardship requires changes in human actions – both behaviour and technical advancement. Pope John Paul linked protecting the environment to ‘authentic human ecology’, which can overcome ‘structures of sin’ and can promote human dignity and respect for Creation.

The Austrian-Jewish philosopher, Martin Buber (1878-1965), in his thesis on human existence, explains how we ought to relate with all of creation from an ‘*I and Thou*’ rather than an ‘*I and It*’ consciousness. He says ‘**Whoever relates to the world and to creation only as something to be used, relates to God in the same way.**’

American author, Wendell Berry, says that ‘man’ cannot be independent of nature: he must live in relation to it. We need the natural places to become quiet in them, to learn from them, to be restored by them. Indeed we need to understand more deeply the debt we owe for our continued existence as a species, to the ‘non-human’ elements of our world.

#### The vital question?

We probably need to ask ourselves what we fear to lose if we choose to go down the road of sustainable living and, if we do make a choice for such a way, are we prepared for what it will involve - the consequences and the freedom?



One small step is all any of us can take, but one small step can become an essential part of the great leap of humankind beyond the present limitations of Homo Sapiens . . . the choice is ours.

We can trudge along life’s way, having regard mainly for our own well-being, or we can pause, like our ancestors before us and leave a footprint in the sand, as a continuing invocation to the deep loving wisdom of the Universe to guide our flight into all that humankind can become.

### Introduction

Energy is essential to our daily lives. It supplies our electricity, fuels our transport and heats our homes. The global warming that has taken place since the 1960's is 90% certain to have been caused by man-made emissions from industry, transport and power generation. The emissions have been growing at an alarming rate, driven mainly by increase in private transport and demand for energy. (IPCC Report 2007) The emissions causing global warming are carbon dioxide from fossil fuel use and land-use change, and methane and nitrous oxide, primarily from agriculture. Our ways of generating energy and our use of energy have become unsustainable and those most affected, by global warming, are the people in the Two-Thirds world.

#### Present consumption of oil

##### Worldwide

1,000 barrels per sec. (i.e. 90 million per day)

##### Ireland

- 9<sup>th</sup> most oil-dependent economy in the world
- 14% higher than EU average
- 57% of our overall energy comes from oil.
- For every 1% increase in economic growth, oil use has gone up by 2%



#### Predictions

##### Worldwide:

Consumption of oil and carbon dioxide emissions will be doubled by 2050.

Fossil fuels are non-renewable and when used up will be no more.

(The World Energy Technological Outlook-2050 Report)

The average person in the One-Third world uses 80 times more fuel in their lifetime than a person from the Two-Thirds world. We also waste up to 50% of all energy generated. This is done through inefficient ways of heating our homes, leaving appliances on stand-by etc. We need to make lifestyle changes to ensure less energy consumption, more efficient use of energy, cleaner generation of energy and increased use of renewable resources.

#### The call to sustainable living asks us:

To consider what our needs are, how we use energy and resources, so that future generations will be able to meet theirs.



#### HOW?



#### Energy efficiency starts at home

Become aware of energy-saving tips – no cost (switch it off) & low cost (see below) Know and access the best products and new technologies. Reduce energy consumption and your energy bill.



## Electricity Saving Tips

### Lighting

- Turn off all lights and heaters when leaving a room.
- Use "task" lighting rather than whole room lighting when a small amount of light is required.
- When standard light bulbs need replacing, replace them with energy saving, CFL bulbs which use 80% less electricity and last 15 times longer.

### Television

- Switch off when not in use - a television in standby mode can use up to as much as half the electricity as when it is switched on.

### Electric Blankets

- Switch on electric blankets no more than ½ hour before you go to bed and switch off just before you get into bed.

### Electric Shower

- Take a shower rather than a bath. A typical shower uses only one fifth of the energy of a full bath.

### Computer

- Turning your computer off at night will save, on

average, 25% of its annual energy bill.

- Configure your computer to "energy saving" mode in which it will automatically change to the state of low consumption.
- Switching off the screen can save more energy than just letting the screen saver run.

### Fridge/Freezer

- Make sure they are positioned in a cool place.
- Check that the door seals on the fridge/freezer are tight fitting. Replace if necessary.
- Defrost, clean the inside and the coils at the back at least every 6 months.
- Decide what you want from the fridge before opening the door. The longer the door is opened, the more energy is needed to cool the fridge again.
- Don't put warm or hot food straight into the fridge / freezer - let it cool down first.
- Defrost food in the fridge.

## Cooking

- Put lids on pots and turn down the heat when the water starts to boil. The lids not only keep heat in the pot but also reduce condensation in the kitchen.
- At a certain point in cooking, turn off electric rings and use their residual heat. Use rings slightly smaller than the pan and save heat from escaping.
- Lots of energy saving cooking devices are under used: like slow casseroles, insulated deep fat fryers, microwave ovens and pressure cookers. They can save both energy and time - with better results!

## Microwaves

- A microwave is more efficient than a cooker for reheating food. See instruction on your microwave for speeding up cooking time.

## Electric Ovens

- The oven is expensive to use - use it as sparingly and efficiently as possible e.g. using it for more than just one item.
- Do not open the oven door to check cooking - every time

you do so you lose 20% of the accumulated heat.

## Toasters & Kettles

- The toaster is more energy efficient than the grill for toasting bread.
- Only boil as much water as you need at a particular time.

## Tumble Dryers

- Dry clothes outside whenever possible
- When drying clothes in a dryer, dry heavy articles separately from light articles and turn the dryer off as soon as the clothes are dry - don't over dry the clothes!

## Washing Machines

- Always fill the washing machine (avoid half loads)
- Hand wash small amounts of clothes
- Use the lowest water temperature required for the items being washed.
- Use a cold rinse for your clothes.

## Dishwashers

- Use low temperature (economy button) when possible; ensure you wash a full load; let the dishes air dry instead of using the drying cycle.

## When purchasing, consider the following:

**Appliances:** Purchase 'A' rated appliances whenever possible, they can save their replacement cost over their lifetime and benefit the environment. (By law special energy labels must be visible on all shop display models for cookers, fridges etc.)

## Heating & Insulating Tips

### Heaters

- Electric heaters other than storage heaters consume electricity at the most expensive charge rate.
- Use a portable heater instead of the central heater, if only one room needs heating.
- Choose heaters with thermostat controls and timers.

### Central Heating

- Proper control and regular maintenance of your heating system can reduce fuel consumption by 0-20%
- Turn off the heating overnight and when you are out during the day.
- If you have gas heating, turn-off pilot lights during the warmer months.
- Fit thermostatic radiator valves to your radiators – allows you to set the temperature of your rooms, 20°C is an ideal room temperature (heat bedrooms to less than 18°C)

### Heat Loss

- Open fires are wasteful of energy, with more than 70% of the energy going up the chimney.
- Close doors to conserve heat.
- If the radiator is mounted below a window, a projecting window-board or shelf above the radiator will direct warm air into the room, reducing heat loss through the window or alternatively fix a reflective foil, backed by insulation, behind the radiators.

### Hot Water Heating

- Use the timer on immersion heaters.
- Heating hot water accounts for 64% of energy consumption in the home: be thrifty in its use.
- 90% of the energy consumption of washing machines goes on heating the water. Wash clothes whenever possible in cold or cool water.
- Install solar panels to back up your hot water supply.

### Insulation

- Much of the heat loss from a house occurs through the windows. Use double glazing. Keep curtains closed at night and ensure that the curtains don't hang over the radiators.
- Fit a lagging jacket (80 mm thick) on your hot water cylinder; keeps water hotter for longer and pays for itself in 2-3 months. If installing a new cylinder, choose one with factory applied insulation – more efficient.
- Insulate your attic (min. 250 mm recommended) and save up to 20% on your home heating bill. Check your attic hatch for draught.
- Insulate walls where possible
- Fit draught excluding strips around doors and windows.

### **N.B. never block ventilators or ventilation blocks**

**Note:** The above is not exhaustive and there are many other ways in which energy can be saved e.g. transport, shopping etc. These will be covered in a later leaflet.

## ACTIONS ON ENERGY

The following is a check list of some of the actions that you can take. You can use this list or draw up your own.

| ACTION   | I WILL TRY THIS ACTION BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING | ACTION TAKEN | COMMENTS |
|--|--|--------------|----------|
| Discuss these energy actions with the rest of your household   |  |              |          |
| Record your energy bill  |  |              |          |
| Pass this information on to at least one other person  |  |              |          |
| Turn off appliances when not in use  |  |              |          |
| Turn off lights in empty rooms   |  |              |          |
| Attend to the actions under the Fridge/Freezer section   |  |              |          |
| Check thermostats and adjust if necessary  |  |              |          |
| Purchase at least one energy efficient light bulb.   |  |              |          |
| Dry clothes outside on the line  |  |              |          |
| Attend to the actions under the heading Computer   |  |              |          |
| Use lids on saucepans  |  |              |          |
| Only boil the amount of water required at that time  |  |              |          |
| Avoid half loads when using the washing machine and dishwasher   |  |              |          |
| Check that the central heating is operating to maximum efficiency  |  |              |          |
| Check the insulation in your home <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insulate your attic up to a min. of 250mm</li> <li>• Fit a lagging jacket on your hot water cylinder</li> <li>• Fit draught excluder strips to doors and windows</li> </ul> |  |              |          |
| Take a community action e.g form a group for mutual support and for spreading the word.  |  |              |          |



## Sources

www.sei.ie (Sustainable Energy Ireland)  
www.esb.ie (Electricity Supply Board)  
www.powerofone.ie  
Cork Environmental Forum (Global Action Plan Eco Team) gap@cef.ie  
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report 2007  
Planet Matters: Irish Times Magazine

**Glossary:** One-Third / Two-Third World - current international acceptable terms for First World and Third World respectively.

CFL - compact fluorescent light bulbs

### Sustainable Living begins with me

Pope John Paul II repeatedly made connections between rampant consumerism and environmental destruction. In 1990 he wrote: 'Modern society will find no solution to the ecological problem unless it **takes a serious look at its lifestyle**. In many parts of the world society is given to instant gratification and consumerism while remaining indifferent to the damage which these cause. The seriousness of the ecological issue lays bare the depth of man's moral crisis. If an appreciation of the value of the human person and of human life is lacking, we will lose interest in others and in the earth itself. Simplicity, moderation and discipline as well as a spirit of sacrifice, must become part of everyday life, lest all suffer the negative consequences of the careless habits of a few.'

(Message of Pope John Paul II for the celebration of the World Day of Peace, 1st January 1990)

### CLIMATE CRISIS - AL GORE

#### RISE

This crisis is bringing us an opportunity to experience  
what few generations in history ever have the privilege of knowing;  
a generational mission;  
the exhilaration of a compelling moral purpose;  
a shared and unifying cause;  
the thrill of being forced by circumstances to put aside the pettiness  
and conflict that so often stifle the restless human need for transcendence;  
the opportunity to rise.

When we do rise, it will fill our spirits and bind us together.  
Those who are now suffocating in cynicism and despair  
will be able to breathe freely.  
Those who are now suffering from loss of meaning in their lives  
will find hope.

When we rise, we will experience an epiphany as we discover  
that this crisis is not really about politics at all.  
It is a moral and spiritual challenge.

Al Gore as published in Resurgence May/June 2007

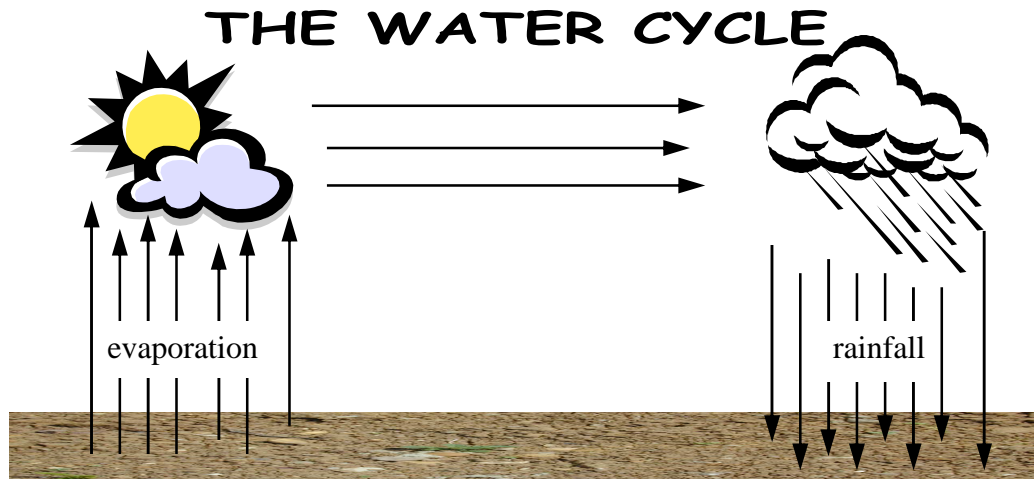
### THE FUTURE IS IN OUR HANDS

## Introduction

When viewed from space, Earth is a beautiful blue planetary gem that appears to have a limitless supply of water. While water covers 70% of the Earth's surface, 97% is salt water and of the remaining 3% only a quarter of it is available for use by all forms of life - the rest being frozen in the ice caps. Water is without doubt the most valuable of all the Earth's natural resources and without it there would be no life on earth.



This precious water has been filtered and recycled by nature via the water cycle for millions of years. We are all familiar with this cycle but seldom stop to think of what happens to this precious fluid as it passes through this cycle.



The freshwater cycle has a natural pace. The water falls as rain, hail or snow, is absorbed into the ground, eventually finds its way to the streams and rivers on its way to the sea, to evaporate and return again as rain. On its way it irrigates the lives of humans and all life forms and recycles itself at its own pace. As we increase its pace, the water has less chance to sink into the ground and go through its own recycling process. Instead it is rushed over the land, taking soil, nitrates and pollutants with it, overflows sewers and flows into the sea leaving contamination and destruction. In Ireland, we are using 70% more water in our homes than we did 30 years ago, the average consumption per household being 119 litres per day. The increased consumption is destroying the water's natural system of recycling, hence our water quality is disimproving year after year.

### How are we destroying our water?

All the water that leaves our houses ends up somewhere. With serious pollution in 30% of our rivers and one in five public water supplies operating under high-risk conditions, it is clear we have a serious water quality problem.

Excessive inputs of phosphates are causing major water pollution. These are present in many of the detergents and cleaning agents that we use. When we put bleach etc. down our toilets and

sinks, they do not help to keep sewers clean, in fact cleaners containing phosphates need more chemicals to remove them from the waste water system.

Also, the use of these detergents and cleaning agents kill the bacteria, preventing them from breaking down waste matter in septic tanks. This leaves the waste matter untreated and together with the chemicals, it contaminates water in rivers, lakes or the sea and ultimately ends up in the food chain.

### Further causes of water pollution

Leaking  
landfill  
sites

Discharge  
from  
factories

Raw  
sewage

Pesticides  
Fertilisers  
Slurry

Backyard  
burning &  
Incinerators

## What can we do?

Protect and conserve the earth's most valuable resource. It's not about the water we use, it's about the water we waste and destroy. We are using up more than our fair share of available water, but we can make a difference in our everyday lives by making informed choices of sustainability. We don't have to stop using the earth's resources but we do have to stop wasting them. By changing small things like those listed below, we can save and protect water and make a difference.

### In the house

- Slow your household water flow. Install low flow water showerheads and taps.
- Put a water displacement device into your toilet cisterns (e.g. one litre plastic bottle).
- Install low / dual flow toilet. All water entering the home has been treated to drinkable quality. About 33% of it leaves via the toilet. Why not install a system of collecting rain water for use in the toilets?
- Don't fill your bath to the top, take a quick shower instead. (A shower uses 32 litres approx, a bath as much as 80 litres)
- Buy sinks with mixer taps for hot and cold water rather than individual hot and cold taps.
- Plug the sink when washing face and hands.
- Turn the tap off when brushing teeth.
- Fill your washing machine - save water and energy.
- By using your dishwasher or washing machine one time less each week you could save over 7,500 litres of water each year.
- Never wash dishes under a running tap.
- Fill your kettle with only the amount of water needed.
- Always repair dripping taps and mend leaking pipes. Leaks from a tap can waste as much as 75 litres a day.

- Insulate hot water cylinder and hot water pipes. This means less water will be wasted waiting for hot water to come out.
- Make sure everyone in the household knows where the stopcock is so that they can turn it off in the case of an emergency.
- Use environmentally friendly cleaning agents, washing powders, washing up liquid, shampoo, soap etc., where possible.

### In the garden

- Make use of our rainwater. Simply leave a bin or barrel in your garden to collect rainwater.
- Use rain water to wash your car and patios as using a bucket instead of a hose will save a significant quantity of water.
- In the garden grow plants that are adapted to dry conditions; to save water also sow plants and trees that don't need much watering.
- Water your flowers and plants with rain water, as plants prefer rainwater to tap water.
- Water the garden early in the morning or in late evening to avoid heavy evaporation during the warmest part of the day.
- Keep the grass 5-8 cm long to provide natural shade that will keep the soil moist and so will need less watering in warm weather
- Use mulch around your plants to retain moisture.

**When buying a new washing machine, choose a model that uses less water - ask your dealer for information.**

Do you know



- Water alone can keep us alive for more than a month
- 1 in every 6 people in the world lacks access to safe drinking water
- 2 million people, mostly children, die each year from waterborne diseases
- Water-related projects and policies are fundamental to building healthy sustainable communities.
- It takes approximately 39,000 gallons of water to manufacture 1 car.
- At least 250 gallons of water are needed to produce 1 ream of paper
- 150 gallons of water are used in the growing/production of a loaf of bread

Water is one of our most precious resources and we must treat it as such

**THE FUTURE IS IN OUR HANDS**

## ACTIONS ON WATER

The following is a check list of some of the actions that you can take. You can use this list or draw up your own.

| ACTION   | I WILL TRY THIS ACTION BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING | ACTION TAKEN | COMMENTS |
|--|--|--------------|----------|
| Discuss these water actions with the rest of your household                            |  |              |          |
| Pass this information on to at least one other person                                  |  |              |          |
| Mend leaking taps/toilets  |  |              |          |
| Install low-flow water showerheads and taps  |  |              |          |
| Put a 1 litre plastic bottle in the toilet cistern                                     |  |              |          |
| Take showers instead of baths  |  |              |          |
| Turn off tap while brushing teeth  |  |              |          |
| Make sure dishwasher/ washing machines are full before using them                      |  |              |          |
| Use eco friendly cleaning agents, washing powders, wash-up liquid etc.                 |  |              |          |
| Fill the kettle with only the amount of water needed                                   |  |              |          |
| Keep cold water in the fridge  |  |              |          |
| Keep the grass 5cm long to avoid evaporation   |  |              |          |
| Use mulch where appropriate  |  |              |          |
| Use watering can rather than a hose  |  |              |          |
| Collect rainwater for watering the garden  |  |              |          |
| Wash your car at home and use a bucket rather than a hosepipe                          |  |              |          |
| Find out about your local water supply/policies/ practices                             |  |              |          |
| Take a community action  |  |              |          |
| Educate yourself on the effect of water shortage on people in other parts of the world |  |              |          |

## Sources

www.taptips.ie

www.enfo.ie

www.epa.ie

Resurgence March/April 2007

Irish Times 25th July 2007

Cork Environmental Forum (Global Action Plan Eco Team) gap@cef.ie

Environment in Focus 2006 Report (publ. by Environmental Protection Agency)

### Other useful Websites/Resources:

www.wdm.org

www.newint.org

The Earth Charter; Passages in Scripture where water is a part of the story / event / scene

### Litany of the Circle - Chief Seattle 1854

Every part of the earth is sacred, every shining pine needle, every sandy shore.  
Every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and humming insect is holy  
The rocky crest, the juices of the meadow, the beasts and all the people  
All belong to the same family.

Teach your children that the earth is our mother  
Whatever befalls the earth befalls the children of the earth  
The water's murmur is the voice of our father's father  
We are part of the earth and the earth is part of us.

The rivers are our brothers, they quench our thirst, the perfumed flowers are our sisters.  
The air is precious, for all of us share the same breath.

The wind that gave our grandparents breath, also receives our last sigh  
The wind that gave our children the spirit of life.

This we know, the earth does not belong to us, we belong to the earth.  
This we know, all things are connected,  
Like the blood that unites our family. All things are connected

Our God is the same God, whose compassion is equal for all.  
For we did not weave the web of life. We are merely a strand in it  
Whatever we do to the web of life we do to ourselves.

Let us give thanks for the web and the circle that connects us.  
Thanks be to God, the God of all.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Prayer for those without access to clean water.

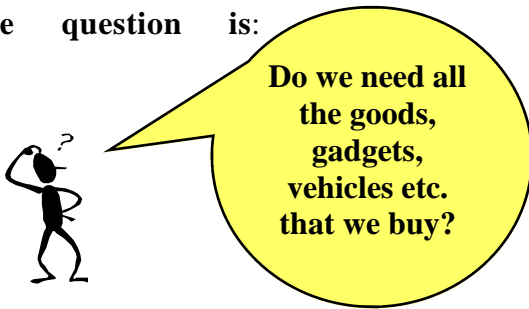
God in heaven, we thank you for the gift of water in our world. Help us to be aware of the millions of men, women and children who do not have access to water. Soften our hearts to do all in our power to use water wisely. Create in us an awareness that, as we reduce our water consumption, we are offering a 'drink' to those in other parts of the world who do not have the luxury of water in abundance.



## THE COST OF SUSTAINABLE LIVING: IS IT ALL ABOUT AUSTERITY AND SELF-DENIAL?

We have been conditioned to think that progress is about doing things, going places, spending money and acquiring new things. Being green was often seen as being mean, uncomfortable, eccentric and unfashionable. Nowadays, however, being green is more mainstream, with manufacturers waking up to the value of going 'green' and consequently producing an increasing range of eco-friendly goods and services. Yet when we go into stores and supermarkets and see the array of products on display, we are often in a dilemma as to how to make the right choice. We all want to make a difference for the environment and the earth community of life, recognising that all species, plant and animal, peoples and cultures have intrinsic value and worth in their own right.

The question is:



Unfortunately, the world economy is based on ever-increasing production to make profit and a great deal of our purchasing is now focused on items not essential to living. We need a new economic system - one that is embedded in the care of all people and also in the care of the Earth and all of life upon it. Our excessive consumption not only impacts on the Earth's resources but dis-improves life for many people living in the 'Two-Thirds World'.

**80% of the world's resources are consumed by 20% of the World's population**

### PURCHASING - THE BUYING MINEFIELD

Consumerism **affects** the health of the population and the planet

Rampant Consumerism **Seriously Harms** You and the Planet

**RAMPANT CONSUMERISM → GLOBAL WARMING → CLIMATE CHANGE**

**How do I OPT OUT of the consumerist mentality and really make a difference to the world around me?**

One of our greatest assets is our spending power. We can all contribute to a better world by the simple choices we make while out shopping. By choosing to buy one brand of coffee over another, we can help the farmers who grow it. When we use eco-friendly detergents we reduce water pollution.

We don't have to feel powerless about the world's problems. Our till receipts are like voting slips. By using them constructively, we can support progressive companies who operate out of good ethical standards – display information about their

company e.g. fair trade mark, organic, GM-free, eco-friendly etc.

Our shopping habits can force changes in the way in which even the largest food corporations and supermarkets do their day-to-day business.

**GO  
GREEN  
NOT  
MEAN**

Each decision, however small, has an impact, especially when we know that millions of others are doing the same. Using our spending power, gives us, consumers, a say in how the products we buy are made and how the manufacturers conduct their business.

# WHAT IS GOOD SHOPPING?

## Good shopping is:

- Buying goods that are made ethically and by companies that act ethically i.e. not causing harm to or exploiting humans, animals or the environment.
- Refusing to buy products that you disapprove of.
- Supporting boycotts on companies known to have questionable practices.
- Being responsible - educating ourselves and our families about the social and environmental impact of corporations.
- Buying only what we really need.

## Good shopping is asking the questions:

- Do I need it?
- Can I provide it myself?
- Could I obtain it from a friend?
- Is it feasible to repair rather than replace?
- Could I hire instead of buying?
- Can I buy it second hand?
- Could I jointly own it with a friend?
- Could I spend less on purchases and use the savings on more worthwhile causes?

## Shopping Tips

- Shop Locally. Do I need food that has high air miles?
- Buy eco-friendly products.
- Buy Fairtrade goods.
- Buy Organic goods.
- Buy a water filter instead of buying lots of bottled water.
- Buy energy efficient items - energy labels help to make informed choices.
- Check efficiency of product, quality of product and durability of product.
- Buy recycled products - this means that fewer natural resources were used in their production.
- Buy re-usable and long-lasting items - products that can be re-used are cheaper in the long run.
- Buy loose fruit and vegetables.
- If buying items in containers select those in recyclable containers.
- Buy items in the largest size you can - look for products with the least packaging or buy in bulk.
- Buy refills rather than new items.
- When buying gifts, don't get carried away with the packaging that makes the gift look good, think of the receiver who has to dispose of the waste. (Easter's eggs are one example of excessive packaging)



**Do not buy - Re-use, Repair, Share or Borrow**

## Ever hear of **S.M.B.L.**?

**S.M.B.L. = Spend More Buy Less**

**Spend More** time in your community - **Buy Less** fuel for motor travel

**Spend More** time at home - **Buy Less** petrol and parking tickets

**Spend More** time exercising and playing sport - **Buy Less** expensive keep-fit equipment

**Spend More** time with your family - **Buy Less** toys and computers

**Spend More** on good food - **Buy Less** expensive health supplements and vitamins

**Spend More** on local products - **Buy Less** products that have travelled hundreds of miles to the shop

**Spend More** time with friends and family - **Buy Less** presents & spend less time working to pay for gifts

**Spend More** time cooking nutritious meals - **Buy Less** expensive unhealthy fast food

**Spend More** on low wattage long-life CFL light bulbs - **Buy Less** polluting electricity

**S.M.B.L. = Sustainable living Means Better Life!**



**THE FUTURE IS IN OUR HANDS**

## ACTIONS ON PURCHASING

The following is a check list of some of the actions that you can take. You can use this list or draw up your own.

| ACTION   | I WILL TRY THIS ACTION BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING | ACTION TAKEN | COMMENTS |
|--|--|--------------|----------|
| Discuss this shopping leaflet with the rest of your household                              |  |              |          |
| Pass this information on to at least one other person                                      |  |              |          |
| Make a list of the companies you are supporting at present (look under your kitchen sink!) |  |              |          |
| Research the ethics of the companies you support   |  |              |          |
| Become familiar with brands that you want to support                                       |  |              |          |
| Buy loose fruit and vegetables   |  |              |          |
| Leave packaging in the shop (if possible)  |  |              |          |
| Check that containers are recyclable   |  |              |          |
| Investigate if it is possible to buy refills (e.g. washing up liquid etc.)                 |  |              |          |
| Find out where your food is coming from and how the growers/ producers are treated         |  |              |          |
| Look twice at everything! 'One person's rubbish is another person's resource'              |  |              |          |
| Cut out the plastic bags and bring your own shopping bag                                   |  |              |          |
| Buy re-usable items e.g rechargeable batteries etc.  |  |              |          |
| Buy eco-friendly products - detergents, cleaning agents etc                                |  |              |          |
| Buy in bulk  |  |              |          |
| Buy more local produce   |  |              |          |
| Buy Fair Trade and organic food  |  |              |          |
| Buy something second-hand, not new   |  |              |          |
| Think before buying - do I really need it?   |  |              |          |
| Don't buy - Repair   |  |              |          |
| Take a community action to promote sustainable living                                      |  |              |          |

## Sources

www.enfo.ie

www.dublin.ie

www.coopamerica.org (responsible shopper)

Resurgence May/June 2007

The Good Shopping Guide, Published by the Ethical Marketing Group (www.thegoodshoppingguide.co.uk)

Your Planet, magazine with The Independent (UK) 19/20 Sept. 2005

### Other useful Websites/Resources:

www.ethicalconsumer.org

www.reducerubbish.gov.nz/shop/tips.html

www.allaboutyou.com

www.greenchoices.org

www.peopletree.co.uk

www.cafod.org

www.foe.org

www.aveda.com

www.fairtrade.ie

www.greenspirit.org.uk

www.reep.org

The Earth Charter;

Scripture: Luke 12:22 - 32

### Beatitudes for Social Engagement

Blessed are you,

when you remain available, sharing in simplicity what you possess.

Blessed are you,

when you creatively devise new ways of donating your possessions, your time, your tenderness and gems of hope.

Blessed are you,

when you listen with your heart to detect what is gift to others.

Blessed are you,

when you strive to take the first step, the necessary one to attain peace with brothers and sisters throughout the world.

Blessed are you,

when you keep in your heart wonderment, openness and free questioning of life.

Blessed are you,

when you take seriously your faith in the God who is the provider of all that we have.

(Louise Helene Renou in 'Spirituality & Poverty in a Land of Plenty' 2004. (adapted))

### Reflection

*The thought manifests as the word;*

*The word manifests as the deed;*

*The deed develops into habit;*

*And the habit hardens the character.*

*So watch the thought and its ways with care,*

*And let it spring from love*

*Born out of concern for all beings.*

**The Buddha (Resurgence May/June '06)**

### Prayer

God of love, you gave us this universe filled with your gifts. Help us to reverence all of your creation, respecting the rights of all species, and the integrity of the elements.

Teach us to use the earth's resources wisely so that our actions may not be cause of increased pain to those who are already suffering.

May we always be in awe of the simple gifts of life.



Transport is one of the major sources of emissions which are harmful to human health, particularly in terms of respiratory and cardio-vascular illnesses. Demand for transport infrastructure (roads etc.) also encroaches on landscape, habitats and biodiversity. **Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>)** is one of the five main emissions from transport after the burning of fossil fuels such as petrol, diesel or even natural gas/LPG.<sup>1</sup> About 100 kg CO<sub>2</sub> is emitted per 40 litres of petrol or diesel. Although not directly harmful to human health, carbon dioxide is the most significant of the greenhouse gases (*ghg*) contributing to climate change. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions remain in the atmosphere up to 200 years or more, trapping increasing amounts of heat and preventing its escape into space.

Emissions are directly proportional to fuel consumption, and as diesel cars use less fuel, they emit less carbon dioxide than petrol cars. There are no technical “end of pipe” solutions to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from vehicles – the only options are reduced driving, increased fuel efficiency and using fuels with a lower carbon content.

More Wealth



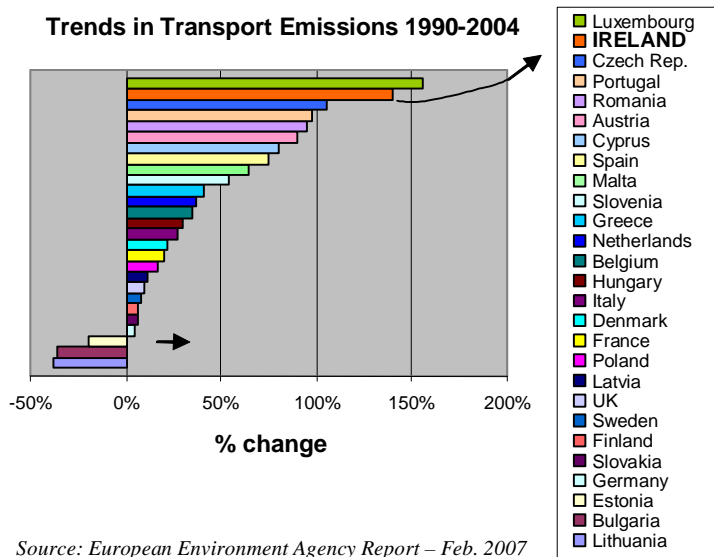
More Cars



More Pollution

Emissions from transport continue to be the main source of growth in *ghg* levels in Ireland, contributing to 18% of the country’s *ghg* emissions. In the past 15 years the number of private cars and goods vehicles in Ireland has more than doubled and road traffic volumes are already at the level predicted for 2010. In 2006 alone the number of cars, vans and trucks in Ireland grew by 7% to just under 2.3 million. This upward growth is expected to continue. Another critical factor in the growth of transport emissions has been the tendency among Irish consumers to buy larger cars which pollute more. Current trends indicate that the rate of increase in total greenhouse gas in Ireland is well above that allowed under the Kyoto Protocol. Transport pollution has risen significantly since Ireland signed the Kyoto Protocol in 1997.

Trends in Transport Emissions 1990-2004



Source: European Environment Agency Report – Feb. 2007

Irish transport sector emissions grew by 7% in 2005 to 13.46 tonnes and now stand at 140% above 1990 levels.  
*Environmental Protection Agency*



The average Irish car travels more than 16,000km a year, significantly above the European average annual distance, thereby producing greater levels of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

**Whose Responsibility?**

New EU regulations setting maximum carbon emission for all new cars will come into force by 2012. In the meantime, individual governments must play their part through taxation measures that penalise inefficient vehicles. The Irish government has talked a lot about global warming but has done very little. In 2005 it formally decided not to introduce a carbon tax, instead opting to buy its way out of its responsibilities through **carbon credits**.

Frank McDonald,  
Environment Editor, Irish Times

Buying carbon credits is akin to borrowing on the never never; it simply puts off the day when the real bill must be paid.

Motorists will have to accept some of the pain involved in counteracting global warming

*European Commission proposals*

Making transport users fully aware of the significant external costs of transport, especially the emission of greenhouse gases, is key to changing travel patterns and consumer purchasing behaviour.

1 Other emissions from transport are carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen oxides (NOx), hydrocarbons and particulates.



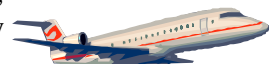
## What we can do:

We can choose a fuel-efficient car which suits our needs. This will benefit both the environment and our pockets as there are considerable fuel cost savings to be made in choosing a more fuel efficient car. We can choose a place to live which reduces the need to drive. Other choices we can make include the following:

- **Own as few motor vehicles as you can.**
- **Choose a low-polluting car** – find your car model and type at – [www.vacarfueldata.org.uk](http://www.vacarfueldata.org.uk) and get a figure for its emissions in grams per Km. At present a Toyota Yaris 1.3cc emits 141g/Km; a Mazda 1.4 emits 169g/Km.
- **Reduce your motor vehicle travel** - aim to cut down on at least one car journey a week – cycle or walk instead.
- **Avoid using your car for short journeys** – plan ahead / combine trips / use less congested routes / avoid rush hours / use public transport / car share / cycle or walk.
- **Cold starts** – a cold car uses more fuel than a warm one – drive off gently after starting.
- **Drive smoothly and efficiently** – harsh acceleration and heavy braking have a very significant effect on fuel consumption. Drive economically by maintaining sufficient distance from the vehicle ahead of you. This allows you to brake and accelerate more smoothly.
- **Slow down** – travel at lower speeds (at 120km fuel consumption rises by 29% compared to driving at 80km). Slowing down in good time saves fuel. An aware driving style can save up to 13% on your fuel consumption.
- **On bends reduce speed in time** and accelerate smoothly when halfway through a bend. This avoids excessive fuel consumption. Watch the road ahead, anticipating problems – your driving style will be smoother and better controlled.
- **Use higher gears** as soon as traffic conditions allow – drive in a gear suitable to road conditions
- **Switch off** – sitting stationary with the engine running causes pollution and excessive fuel consumption. When it is safe to do so, it is more economical to switch off the engine (even if you have to wait for only 30 seconds) and restart again when necessary.
- **Lose weight** – don't carry unnecessary weight in the boot. Remove roof racks when not in use. They can increase fuel consumption by 40%
- **Keep the pressure up** – make sure the tyres are inflated to the correct pressure for the vehicle.
- **Keep your engine tuned** - regular servicing keeps the engine at best efficiency. If 1% of car owners properly maintain their cars, nearly a billion pounds of carbon dioxide are kept out of the atmosphere.
- Do not compromise safety but **be aware that the use of on-board electrical devices increases fuel consumption**. Fuel consumption increases by 3% - 5% if the rear-screen demister is switched on.
- **Front windows** half open consume up to 10% more fuel at 120km than at 80km. Use the air vents instead. A **sun-roof** fully open consumes up to 4% more fuel and half-open up to 3%.
- **Use air conditioning sparingly** – running air conditioning continuously increases fuel consumption significantly.
- To get the most from your car **check your fuel consumption**. Changes in overall consumption may indicate a fault



**Air travel:** One very large and increasingly controversial area of emissions is air travel. Aviation's impact on climate is worsened by the fact that jet emissions happen high up in the atmosphere, where they can do most damage. It is because flights allow us to travel so many thousands of miles in just a few hours that their carbon cost is so high.



Calculate your carbon emissions for any flights you take at [www.chooseclimate.org/flying](http://www.chooseclimate.org/flying) and consider taking some positive action to 'offset' your emissions.

## ACTIONS ON TRANSPORT

The following is a checklist for some of the actions that you can take. You may also like to use this list to draw up your own checklist.

| <b>Action</b>  | <b>I will try this action before the next meeting</b> | <b>Action Taken</b> | <b>Comments</b> |
|--|---|---------------------|-----------------|
| Discuss these transport actions with the rest of your household            |   |                     |                 |
| Pass this information on to at least one other person                      |   |                     |                 |
| Check the level of your car's emissions at the website on page 2           |   |                     |                 |
| Leave the car at home: walk or cycle or use public transport when possible |   |                     |                 |
| Travel at a lower speed  |   |                     |                 |
| Maintain a safe distance from the car in front of you                      |   |                     |                 |
| Check the pressure in your tyres and your fuel consumption                 |   |                     |                 |
| Use the air vents instead of open windows, air-conditioning or sun-roof    |   |                     |                 |
| Get your car serviced regularly  |   |                     |                 |
| Remove unnecessary weight from the boot                                    |   |                     |                 |
| Remove roof-rack when not in use   |   |                     |                 |
| Do not leave the engine running when stationary                            |   |                     |                 |
| Switch off the rear screen demister when the windows are clear             |   |                     |                 |
| Car-share where possible   |   |                     |                 |
| Plan ahead to combine trips so reducing the use of car                     |   |                     |                 |

When purchasing a new car ask the sales person for the *Guide to Passenger Vehicle Fuel Economy & CO2 Emissions*.

**THE FUTURE IS IN OUR HANDS**

## GLOSSARY

**Kyoto Protocol:** The 'Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change' is an international agreement on fighting climate change, assigning mandatory emission limitations for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to the signatory nations.

The objective of the protocol is the "stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous interference by humans with the climate system."

As of June 2007, a total of 172 countries and other governmental entities have ratified the agreement. Notable exceptions include the United States and Australia. Other countries, like India and China, which have ratified the protocol, are not required to reduce carbon emissions under the present agreement.

**Offsetting:** Carbon offset schemes are supposed to nullify the effect of carbon emissions in one part of the world, by investing in developments which reduce carbon emissions elsewhere, or which take carbon out of the atmosphere.

People who join the new fashion for buying carbon offsets are urged to check what they are buying before they hand over the money.

Some schemes may be doing environmental damage in the developing world without curbing climate change. Environmentalists fear that big polluters will turn to buying offsets to ease their consciences, instead of cutting air miles.

**Carbon Credits:** In 1997 the Kyoto Protocol launched the idea of carbon credits – a process by which those who were creating greenhouse gases could neutralise their emissions by paying for products which were absorbing CO<sub>2</sub>.

The EU countries have agreed to set up an internal market, enabling companies to trade carbon dioxide pollution permits.

Companies exceeding their quotas are allowed to buy unused credits from those doing better at cutting their emissions.

Flexible mechanisms allowing member states to 'buy' carbon credits from carbon reduction projects outside the EU undermine the EU's pledge to cut emissions at home, while over-allocation and free-of-charge pollution credits by several member states is forcing carbon prices down and undermining the scheme's credibility.

**A carbon tax** is the best, cheapest and most efficient way to combat climate change. It's straightforward and much harder to be manipulated by special interests than the politicized process of allocating carbon credits.

### SOURCES:

Sustainable Energy Ireland - [www.sei.ie](http://www.sei.ie)

Eco- Justice Ministries [www.eco-justice.org](http://www.eco-justice.org)

ENFO - [www.enfo.ie](http://www.enfo.ie)

The Society of the Irish Motor Industry [www.simi.ie](http://www.simi.ie)

Environmental Protection Agency - [www.epa.ie](http://www.epa.ie)

*Great Spirit,  
give us hearts to understand,  
never to take from creation's beauty more than we can give;  
Never to destroy wantonly for the furtherance of greed;  
Never to deny to give our hands for the building of earth's beauty;  
Never to take from her what we cannot use.  
Give us hearts to understand,  
that to destroy earth's music is to create confusion;  
That to wreck her appearance is to blind us to beauty;  
That to callously pollute her fragrance is to make a house of stench;  
That as we care for her, she will care for us. Amen.*

*UN Environmental Sabbath Program*

## Introduction

There have been many beneficial developments in the production of food over the years - yields have improved dramatically, new varieties have evolved and quality has been enhanced by the discovery of ways to protect plant yield against adverse effects such as disease and bad weather. Advanced cultivation techniques, new breeds of animals, modern machinery and facilities have all contributed to the progress which today's producers of food enjoy.

However, there is another side to the story and mistakes have been made. The dramatic turnabout over the past century has been achieved through a massive and ever-increasing input of chemicals, with little thought for tomorrow. Larger machines have demanded larger fields, and as a result, trees and hedgerows have disappeared taking their dependent wildlife with them. Intensive farming decreases the soil nutrients necessary for healthy growth, so in order to maintain these nutrient levels, more and more chemical fertilisers are poured over the land every year, filling the food we eat with alien chemicals as well as polluting our waterways.

## An Alternative - 'GO ORGANIC'

### What is organic food and farming?

**Organic food** is **quality** food produced to strict, legally backed internationally recognized standards. **Organic farming** represents a different view of farming systems, which puts a strong emphasis on environmentally friendly and sustainable practices, with particular concern for animal welfare.

***Organic farming actively promotes healthy soil by working in harmony with nature and avoids the use of synthetic fertilisers, chemicals and additives.***



Herb & veg. garden, Nano Nagle Centre

### OBJECTIVES FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTION ARE TO:

- (a) establish a sustainable management system for agriculture that:
- (i) respects nature's systems and cycles and sustains and enhances the health of soil, water, plants and animals and the balance between them;
  - (ii) contributes to a high level of biological diversity;
  - (iii) makes responsible use of energy and the natural resources, such as water, soil, organic matter and air;
  - (iv) respects high animal welfare standards and in particular meets animals' species-specific behavioural needs;
- (b) aim at producing products of high quality
- (c) aim at producing a wide variety of foods and other agricultural products that respond to consumers' demand for goods produced by the use of processes that do not harm the environment, human health, plant health or animal health and welfare.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup>Official Journal of the European Union Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007

### HOW DO I RECOGNISE ORGANIC FOOD?

The organic sector in Ireland is regulated by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

The Department has approved two independent organic bodies to inspect and certify producers using the stated criteria for organic production. These are **IOFGA** and **ORGANIC TRUST**.

Farmers, growers, processors and importers have to undergo a stringent annual inspection process before receiving a licence, from one of these bodies, to sell their produce as organic.

All food produced to these standards is permitted to be labelled with the word '**CERTIFIED ORGANIC**'. These words should always be accompanied by the code of a relevant approved inspection body. Each body may also display their own symbol on the label as follows:



IRL -OIB2-EU



IRL -OIB3-EU

If the product you are buying is not Irish, the label should state its country of origin and must display the name and/or code of the approved EU inspection body, which certified the product as organic.

However, if an imported product is packed by an Irish organic company it should carry one of the above codes.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> [www.agriculture.gov.ie/organics](http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/organics)



## Why should we 'GO ORGANIC'?

There are many reasons for choosing organic:

### Quality

organically-raised food retains fewer chemical residues; it can taste better; it contains more nutrients than conventionally farmed products.

### Greenhouse gas, CO<sub>2</sub>

soil that is farmed organically can absorb significant amounts of CO<sub>2</sub>. Soil that is managed using 'green' methods such as no-till and winter-cover crops absorbs 30% more CO<sub>2</sub> than conventionally-farmed land.

### Impact

smaller environmental impact, less pollution from pesticides, herbicides, fungicides and fertilisers.

### Cost

*while organic food costs more, you are buying a sustainable product.* It costs more because: Less intensive farming methods are used. Organic animal feed is generally more expensive. Higher labour input needed to control weeds.  
*Shop around and you may pay less!*

### Sustainability

organic practices actively build up the soil (rather than depleting it) by improving water retention and helping to prevent erosion.  
**Soil being the foundation of the food chain, the primary focus of organic farming is to use practices that build up healthy soils.**

### Spiritual

We are urged in the bible to care for creation ... God, having created humankind entrusted them to till and care for the soil i.e. making sure that the world of nature may flourish, with all its intricate, interacting systems upon which life depends.

## What can I do?

### Take the best care of the patch of earth entrusted to you

Build up and restore nutrients through:

**Composting** - compost is a wonderful source of nutrients for the vegetable patch whereby organic matter is returned to the soil from which it came.

**Water** - a rainwater collection system reduces the amount of water used in the garden during drier months and is also better than tap water for plants.

**Leaf mulch** - leaves are broken down by fungi and the resulting material can be used as a mulch to deter weeds, or it can be worked into the top layer of the soil to improve its structure and nutrient content.

**Wormery** - worms are a gardener's best friend. All kitchen leftovers can be put into the wormery. The worm compost is very rich and makes perfect potting or growing medium when mixed with fine organic bark and sand.

**Growing comfrey** which is very rich in potassium

**Fighting pests and diseases** by companion planting, biological control, physical barriers e.g. plastic bottles, beer traps. Keeping ducks can sort out the slug problem very effectively!

### Shop local

**Purchase organic food, when possible.**

**Purchase locally produced organic food, thereby supporting local jobs and cutting down on super-polluting 'food miles'.**

**Locate your nearest Farmers' Market (for better prices)**

### Become an organic producer no matter how small!

#### **Grow your own vegetables:**

The organic grower:

- works with nature rather than against it
- recycles natural materials to maintain soil fertility
- rotates crops and
- encourages natural methods of pest and disease control, rather than relying on chemicals.

The organic way to feed plants is to allow them draw on the reservoir of nutrients that build up in the soil, as a result of the work of the micro-organisms, as and when they want them. Plants grown in this way will be stronger and more able to resist attacks by pests and diseases.

**Grow your own herbs:** A selection of herbs, of culinary and medicinal value, is not only of economic benefit but is also a great way of attracting insects, bees and butterflies to the garden.

**Care of animals and poultry:** Animals are raised in humane and healthy conditions so that they develop their own natural immunities to diseases, and avoid reliance on antibiotics and other drugs. Animals must not be allowed to suffer and sick animals must be treated and given the prescribed medicine by the vet (permission to be obtained from certifying body).



## Is organic food better for you?

- **Healthy:** Organic food meets stringent standards that are an assurance that food is healthy and safe to eat. On average, organic food contains higher levels of vitamin C and essential minerals such as calcium, magnesium, iron and chromium as well as cancer-fighting antioxidants. Doctors recommend organic food, as there is more goodness in food grown naturally than in food grown with the aid of synthetic fertiliser.
- **Pesticides:** An obvious health benefit of eating organic food is the avoidance of residues of pesticides and weed killers. Since over 311 pesticides can be routinely used in non-organic farming, it is obvious that residues are less likely to be present in organic than in non-organic food.
- **Additives:** Around 300 additives are permitted in conventional food, only 47 (post EU reg. 780/2006) are permitted under EU organic regulations and these are various vitamins and minerals that are actually good for us.
- **GM-free:** Genetically modified (GM) crops and ingredients are not allowed under organic standards. Over a million tons of GM crops are imported to feed non-organic livestock that produce much of the non-organic pork, bacon, milk, cheese and other dairy products in our supermarkets.

All organic farms and food companies are inspected at least once a year under the standards laid down in European law.

### ACTIONS ON 'ORGANIC'

**The following is a check list of some of the actions that you can take. You can use this list or draw up your own**

| ACTION   | I WILL TRY THIS ACTION BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING | ACTION TAKEN | COMMENTS |
|--|--|--------------|----------|
| Discuss this leaflet with the rest of your household   |  |              |          |
| Pass this information on to at least one other person  |  |              |          |
| Add at least one organic food product to your shopping basket  |  |              |          |
| Source supplies of organic produce in your locality  |  |              |          |
| Shop local and buy locally produced organic food   |  |              |          |
| Purchase non-food organic products when possible e.g. cotton products  |  |              |          |
| Examine what you are using in your garden/flower beds - pesticides? non-organic fertilizers? etc. and make some changes if necessary |  |              |          |
| Improve your soil quality by using your own home-made compost  |  |              |          |
| Increase biodiversity in your garden/flower beds   |  |              |          |
| Care for the water quality by avoidance of chemicals, bleaches etc.  |  |              |          |
| Become more familiar with organic and non-organic produce by reading and research (see overleaf)                                     |  |              |          |

**THE FUTURE IS IN OUR HANDS**

## Sources:

<sup>1</sup>Official Journal of the European Union, [www.europa.eu.int](http://www.europa.eu.int)

<sup>2</sup>Leaflet: Your Guide to ORGANIC Food and Farming, Dept. of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food, [www.agriculture.gov.ie/organics](http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/organics)

Organic Matters (Ireland's Organic Magazine), Issue 92 Nov/Dec 2006

Organic Trade Association, [www.ota.com](http://www.ota.com)

Soil Association, [www.soilassociation.org](http://www.soilassociation.org)

Irish Times: Planet Matters, 20th Oct. 2007

## Other useful Websites/Resources:

[www.irishorganics.ie](http://www.irishorganics.ie)

[www.organic-trust.org](http://www.organic-trust.org)

[www.irishseedsavers.ie](http://www.irishseedsavers.ie)

[www.organiccentre.ie](http://www.organiccentre.ie)

[www.brownenvelopeseeds.com](http://www.brownenvelopeseeds.com)

[www.fruithillfarm.com](http://www.fruithillfarm.com)

[www.enfo.ie](http://www.enfo.ie)

[www.nanonaglebirthplace.ie](http://www.nanonaglebirthplace.ie)

[www.iofga.org](http://www.iofga.org)

The Organic Book by Geoff Hamilton

Organic Living by Michael Van Straten

Organic Matters, a bi-monthly publication from IOFGA

Resurgence, a bi-monthly publication

The Farmers' Journal

Farmers' Markets [www.irelandmarkets.ie](http://www.irelandmarkets.ie)

“God sleeps in the stones,  
Dreams in the plants,  
Stirs in the animals,  
Sings in the birds,  
And awakens in the human.”

(source unknown)

### A Psalm of Thanksgiving

You visit the earth and water it,  
you load it with riches;  
God's rivers brim with water,  
to provide its grain.

This is how you provide it:  
by drenching its furrows, by levelling its ridges,  
by softening it with showers, by blessing the first-fruits.

You crown the year with your bounty,  
abundance flows wherever you pass;  
the desert pastures overflow;  
the hillsides are wrapped in joy;  
the meadows are dressed in flocks,  
the valleys are clothed in wheat  
what shouts of joy, what singing!

extract from Psalm 65

## INTRODUCTION

In her book, 'Out of Wonder', Nellie McLaughlin speaks of the Stone Age people, the Cro-Magnon, who created technologies for survival with little intrusion into the life of the planet.

She writes, 'The Cro-Magnon lived in tune with the rhythm and melodies of the universe, conscious of the inner connectedness of all life. For these our early ancestors, life in all its manifestations was sacred, a mystery..... they possessed a profound sense of our relatedness to the natural environment. Like my Cro-Magnon forbearers, I too will one day be an ancestor. What legacy would I like to bequeath to my community of the universe?'

What wisdom, what quality of life do I wish to pass on to the younger of all species? My response will determine my attitudes, values, priorities, choices and decisions.'

*What legacy would I like to bequeath to my community of the universe?*

## MY LEGACY

When we think about how people will remember us, we automatically hope that it will be related to the good we have done or at least that we will not have left a trail of destruction behind us.

We can argue that we live very simply, have cut down on air travel, use of the car, use energy efficient light bulbs etc. etc.



### BUT

have we looked at our cleaning products under the kitchen sink?

Our modern lives are bombarded by more and more chemicals which claim to work faster, clean cleaner and get rid of all known germs. Have we ever thought about the role of 'germs', bacteria?



For instance, if we allow chemicals to enter our septic tanks, we are destroying the bacteria necessary to break down the waste, consequently, the waste builds up, untreated, and then has to be diluted and pumped out by professional septic tank experts.

The biggest problem is that most people don't realise that bacteria are necessary to work on the waste in a septic tank and lots of cleaning products and soaps are now anti-bacterial.

## Non-biodegradable and toxic chemicals

Problems associated with cleaning products come from the chemicals that most of them contain. There are thousands of chemicals in common use and many have not been tested for health and safety.

After entering the water system, some take a long time to break down into harmless products, others may not break down at all and eventually enter the food chain.

There are many alternative cleaning agents with natural ingredients which are safe and non-toxic. You can make your own or buy eco-friendly ones.

**'It is not possible to add pesticides to water anywhere without threatening the purity of water everywhere'**

Quote from Rachel Carson in 'Out of Wonder'

## ALL PURPOSE CLEANERS

There are many ordinary household cleaners which are easy to obtain and can be used on most surfaces; **Vinegar, lemons, baking soda and plain water will clean any house.**



Try out some of the following for general cleaning:

- ◆ 4 tablespoons of baking powder dissolved in 2 pints of warm water
- ◆ Baking soda on a damp sponge
- ◆ Liquid castile soap and baking soda or Borax in different ratios. Use a little soap and soda/borax in lots of water on floors, walls or counters. Use more soap, soda/borax for tubs, sinks, cat boxes, anything that can be well rinsed.
- ◆ A paste made from baking soda and water
- ◆ 3 tablespoons of vinegar, ½ teaspoon washing soda, ½ teaspoon vegetable oil-based liquid soap, 2 cups of hot water
- ◆ Lemon juice cuts through grease and removes perspiration and other stains from clothes - an alternative to harmful bleach
- ◆ Washing soda cleans clothes, softens water, cuts grease, increases the cleaning power of soap

**Vinegar** is an almost universal cleaner: removes red wine and ink stains, de-scales kettles, repairs scratches on wood, excellent water softener, disinfects, deodorises, gives all your whites an immaculate sparkle, prevents and combats mildew, repels ants, cleans windows and mirrors - the list is endless.

### Disinfectants:

Mix a half-cup of borax with 1 gallon of water. Add a few sprigs of fresh thyme, rosemary or lavender (or a few drops of essential oils). Steep for 10 minutes, strain, cool and store in a plastic spray bottle.

### Glass cleaner:

Use undiluted vinegar or equal parts vinegar and water in a spray bottle.

**No-streak glass cleaner:** ¼ cup white vinegar, 1 tablespoon cornstarch, 2 pints of warm water.

Mix the ingredients and apply with a sponge or pour into a spray bottle and use. Wipe dry with crumpled newspaper.



### Air Fresheners:

Many house plants remove pollutants as well as CO<sub>2</sub> from the air, promote better work performance, absorb noise, filter dust and dirt from the air, elevate the general mood and reduce stress levels. Some of the best are Areca Palm, Rubber plant, Peace Lily, Spider Plant, Ivy. Vinegar or lemon slices in an open bowl also rid rooms of odours.



### Toilet Cleaners:

Baking soda and vinegar: Sprinkle baking soda into the toilet bowl, then squirt with vinegar and scour with a toilet brush - cleans and deodorises.

### Tub and tile cleaner:

Vinegar removes most dirt without scrubbing, doesn't leave a film. Use 1 cup vinegar to 1 gallon water.

### Kitchen cleaners

#### Ovens:

Clean spills as soon as they occur. While oven is still warm, sprinkle salt or baking soda on the spill (dampen if necessary). When oven cools, scrape away the spill and wash the area clean.

#### Dishes:

In dishwashers use equal parts of Borax and washing soda.

#### Drinking glasses:

Occasionally soak drinking glasses in a solution of vinegar and water to get them really clean and sparkling.

#### Coffee/Tea stains:

Rub cups or worktops with baking soda paste.

#### Carpets/Upholstery:

Club soda is a great non-toxic carpet stain remover. Soak the spot immediately with soda and blot until the stain is gone.

#### Drain cleaner:

Pour ½ cup of baking soda, followed by 1 cup of vinegar. Allow the mixture to foam for several minutes before flushing the drain with 1 gallon of boiling water.



## ACTIONS ON GREEN CLEANING

The following is a check list of some of the actions that you can take. You can use this list or draw up your own.

| ACTION  | I WILL TRY THIS ACTION BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING | ACTION TAKEN | COMMENTS |
|---|--|--------------|----------|
| Discuss this leaflet with the rest of your household  |  |              |          |
| Pass this information on to at least one other person   |  |              |          |
| Examine the cleaning agents you are currently using. Are they eco-friendly?                         |  |              |          |
| Become familiar with harmful chemicals  |  |              |          |
| Estimate your present expenditure on cleaning agents  |  |              |          |
| Make a decision on how you are going to change your habits  |  |              |          |
| Try out some home-made cleaning agents in your kitchen and bathroom                                 |  |              |          |
| Clean your microwave with lemon.  |  |              |          |
| Polish your shoes with a banana skin  |  |              |          |
| Add at least one ECO-friendly cleaning agent to your shopping basket e.g. Ecover or BioD            |  |              |          |
| Open your windows instead of using air fresheners   |  |              |          |
| At the end of a month estimate your savings on cleaning agents                                      |  |              |          |
| Reflect on the call from Scripture to 'Take care of all that has been entrusted to you' 1 Tim. 6:20 |  |              |          |
| Visit some of the websites listed over -leaf and see the endless lists of natural cleaning agents   |  |              |          |

**THE FUTURE IS IN OUR HANDS**



## Sources:

**Out of Wonder:** The Evolving Story of the Universe by Nellie McLaughlin

**Irish Times Magazine** 26/01/'08: Jane Powers

**Resurgence** No. 230 May/June 2005

[www.thevinegarbook.co.uk](http://www.thevinegarbook.co.uk)

[www.greenchoices.org](http://www.greenchoices.org)

[www.geocities.com/Heartland/Prairie/8088/clngr.html](http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Prairie/8088/clngr.html) (Google: Clean & Green: Natural homemade household cleaners)

## Other useful Websites/Resources:

[www.videojug.com/film/how-to-clean-your-home-without-harming-the-environment](http://www.videojug.com/film/how-to-clean-your-home-without-harming-the-environment)

[www.foe.org](http://www.foe.org)

**Check your local supermarkets for environmentally friendly cleaning products**

[www.resurgence.org](http://www.resurgence.org) or see magazine **Resurgence:** March/April 2005 Spiritual Imperative by Satish Kumar

**The Little Green Book for Big Green Ideas:** Friends of the Earth publ.

**The Ecological Crisis:** A Common Responsibility. Pope John Paul 11 1st Jan. 1990 (No. 15)

**Psalm 104** The Glories of Creation

**1Cor. 4: 1-5** What is expected of stewards

## Some Facts

- ☹ **In homes where aerosol sprays and air fresheners are used frequently, families suffer 25% more depression**
- ☹ **Approx. 95% of all ingredients used by the fragrance industry are synthetic, many are toxic, and a substantial portion is known to be carcinogenic**
- ☹ **As babies enter this world they face more chemicals in their own bedrooms than their ancestors of one hundred years ago were exposed to in a lifetime.**
- ☹ **In 2000, cleaning products were responsible for nearly 10% of all toxic exposures reported in the US.**

Source: Resurgence No. 230: May/June 2005

## A thought

The earth cannot continue to absorb pain indefinitely without threatening the future survival of humanity. God's ownership of the world urges us to pay attention to ecological justice as well as social justice. We need to consider just relations between human beings, other creatures and with the earth itself. All life forms are interconnected with each other and with the triune God. Ecological integrity is an essential part of all faith traditions and is an issue which should unite all the peoples of the world.

Let it not be '*Only when the last tree has died and the last river poisoned and the last fish been caught will we realize that we cannot eat money.*' (Cree Indian Saying quoted in 'Out of Wonder')

## INTRODUCTION

*'We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors , we borrow it from our children'*. This native American saying is more true now than ever before.

We are using up the resources of the earth much faster than they can be regenerated. Our oil is running out, our turf and coal are running out and each day we are mowing down the rain forests at an alarming rate. According to recent reports, about half the food produced worldwide goes to waste. Most of this wasted food goes to landfill and in its breakdown process contributes greatly to the build up of greenhouse gases.

If the present rate of production and consumption continues what kind of a world will there be for future generations? We are borrowing very heavily from generations to come and without any hope of repayment.

In the Ireland of not too long ago, when we were not

economically as well off as we are today, we took great care of our environment. Everything was re-used over and over. There was practically no waste as what we called waste was either fed to animals, put into a dung heap (which turned into compost) or items were repaired and re-used. Our reasons for living in such a manner may not have been for love of the environment but because we were driven to it for economic reasons.

Now that we are financially better off, more educated on the possible consequences of our actions as well as climate change and its effects on the people of the world, should we not be even more careful about how we use the resources of this world and stop creating mountains of waste?

We can reduce the waste we produce by using less and by re-using and recycling what we can. This will have a 3-fold benefit - reduce the need for landfills and help save energy and natural resources.

## One person's waste is another person's treasure

### Facts

- Up to 30% of household waste is organic and can be composted to produce nutritious compost which is ideal for the garden.
- A small household sends approx. 3,000 tons of eggshells to landfill each year. These could be profitably used to keep the slugs away from small plants.
- By recycling one aluminium can, enough energy can be saved to light a 100 watt light bulb for 20 hours.
- For every ton of paper used for recycling, 17 trees are spared, 7000 gallons of water are saved, 4200kWh less of electricity is used.
- A child uses 5,850 disposable nappies in the first few years of its life. This weighs the same as an average family car.
- For every ton of new products we buy, 10 tons of resources are used to manufacture them.
- It is predicted that over the next 10 years global paper consumption will rise by 80%! Most of that growth is due to packaging.
- Debris causes the deaths of more than a million

seabirds yearly as well as 100,000 marine mammals.

- Currently we landfill 86.7% of our municipal waste!
- Ireland, per head of population is among the highest waste producers in Europe, 91% of Ireland's waste is consigned to landfill each year and only 9% is recovered.

### Sustainable 'Waste' Management?

Managing our waste in a sustainable way means that we view waste differently - not as *'useless rubbish'*. Much of what we call waste is either valuable as a resource for which another use can be found, or for the material that it contains which has the potential to become another product.

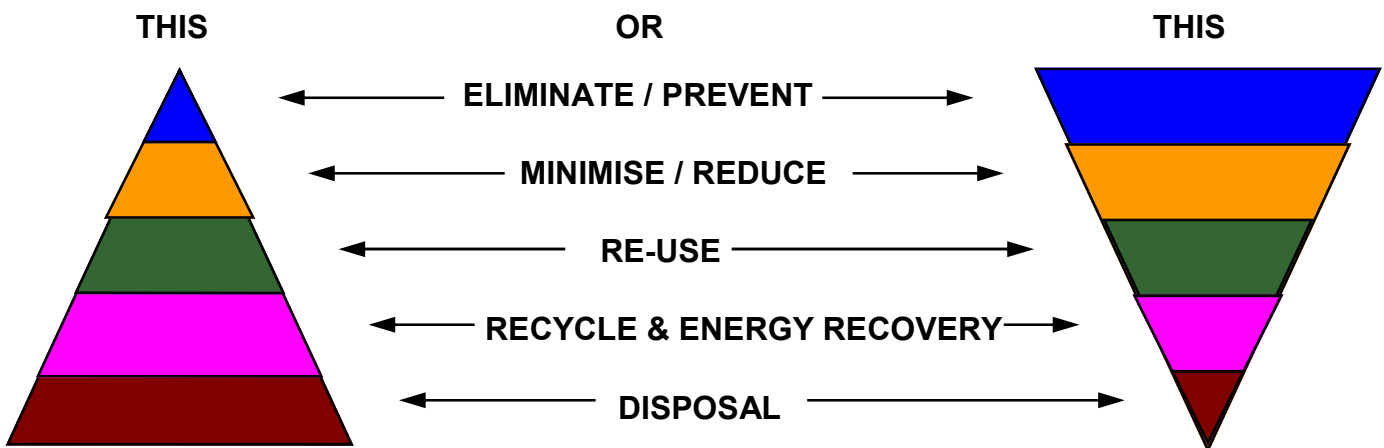
Resource depletion and waste generation are two sides of the same coin. Resources are extracted, used to manufacture a product that is bought, consumed and consequently thrown away. Waste generation has been increasing in tandem with our increasing consumption of goods and services and has now reached a critical level.

**THE TIME TO UNFREEZE OUR CURRENT WAY OF ACTING IS NOW**

**'We are producing over twice as much household and commercial waste as we did 10 years ago' (epa 2008)**

# How can we manage our waste?

The waste pyramid. Which is true of our practices?



The first step in waste prevention is elimination of waste. If we accomplish this we will not need to find ways of disposing of waste. **The top 3 options on the waste hierarchy are Elimination, Minimisation and Re-use.**

## 1st Step

### Eliminate / Prevent

Prevention is the key to avoiding waste. Less waste means wiser use of natural resources. We can avoid much waste if we shop wisely and buy only the quantity we need for use.

## 2nd Step

### Minimise / Reduce

One of the best ways to minimise our waste is to think before we shop. Do we have to bring home so much excess packaging? Do we need individually wrapped items? Do we remember to bring our own re-usable shopping bag?

## 3rd Step

### Re-use

Can we find other uses for our products? Can we maintain, repair, share or sell them? Before you recycle, ask yourself is there another use for this product e.g. packaging from takeaways can be re-used as lunch boxes or plant containers.

## 4th Step

### Recycling/Energy Recovery

The next best thing you can do with your waste is to recycle it and hence it can be made into a new product. When purchasing products, select those which are recyclable. Also choose products which are made from recycled material or those with the highest recycled content.

## 5th Step

### Disposal

Only when our product cannot be taken care of through any of the above 4 steps should we send it to landfill. Besides we pay dearly for what we send to landfill. Landfills are expensive to maintain, release gases and require constant monitoring. *'Out of sight is not out of mind'*

## REMEMBER

Out of sight is not out of mind

AND

The less we weigh, the less we pay!

**Always shop with the environment in mind**

## ACTIONS ON WASTE

The following is a checklist for some of the actions that you can take. You may also like to use this list to draw up your own checklist.

| Action  | I will try this action before the next meeting | Action Taken | Comments |
|---|--|--------------|----------|
| Discuss this leaflet with the rest of your household  |  |              |          |
| Pass this information on to at least one other person   |  |              |          |
| Estimate how much waste you throw out per year? Aim at <b>halving your amount</b> during the coming year  |  |              |          |
| Set up a compost system for your organic waste. Remember a <b>third</b> of household waste can be <b>composted</b>                              |  |              |          |
| Dispose of hazardous waste safely. Some items are too dangerous to go to landfill. Find out when the Chem Car is in your vicinity               |  |              |          |
| Choose <b>re-usable</b> items over disposable - cut loose from one use  |  |              |          |
| Choose products with the <b>minimum packaging</b>   |  |              |          |
| Choose items that are <b>packaged in recyclable material</b> e.g. paper or cardboard  |  |              |          |
| Use every opportunity to explain to shop owners why you are selecting items based on their packaging. <b>Leave extra packaging in the shop.</b> |  |              |          |
| Always <b>print on both sides</b> of a page. Using one side is only using half its life.  |  |              |          |
| Find uses for paper that has been printed on one side only  |  |              |          |
| Refuse <b>Junk mail</b> : even if it is recycled is waste of energy and paper. (see next page on how to do this)                                |  |              |          |
| Always use <b>re-usable</b> shopping bags   |  |              |          |
| <b>Eliminate plastic bags</b> from your life. It takes 11 barrels of oil to make 1 ton of plastic bags  |  |              |          |
| Get broken things mended  |  |              |          |
| Encourage mothers to use <b>decomposable</b> nappies - give someone a free sample   |  |              |          |
| Take a community action   |  |              |          |

**THE FUTURE IS IN OUR HANDS**

## SOURCES

[www.epa.ie](http://www.epa.ie)

[www.enfo.ie](http://www.enfo.ie)

[www.laois.ie](http://www.laois.ie)

[www.dublinwaste.ie](http://www.dublinwaste.ie)

Cork Environmental Forum (Global Action Plan Eco Team) [gap@cef.ie](mailto:gap@cef.ie)

## OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES

[www.foe.ie](http://www.foe.ie)

[www.zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)

[www.savecashsaveplanet.org](http://www.savecashsaveplanet.org)

**Save Cash and Save the Planet:** Andrea Smith & Nicola Baird, 2005, Harpur Collins Publication

**Local Authority Websites** have excellent information on Bring Banks, Recycling facilities in your area and also on how to Reduce, Re-use and Recycle.

**How to Block Junk Mail:** Download 'Mailing Preference Service Form' from [www.dublinwaste.ie](http://www.dublinwaste.ie), complete it and post to the address given.

**Dublin's Free Trade** - a facility to pass on your unwanted items or pick up some gem which may be of use to you - all for free. See [www.dublinwaste.ie](http://www.dublinwaste.ie)

*'By his incarnation, Christ inserted himself not just into our humanity, but into the universe which supports humanity.'* Teilhard de Chardin

### A PRAYER AMONG FRIENDS

Among other wonders of our lives, we are alive  
With one another, we walk here  
In the light of an unlikely world  
That isn't ours for long.  
May we spend generously  
The time we are given.  
May we enact our responsibilities  
As thoroughly as we enjoy  
Our pleasures. May we see with clarity,  
May we seek a vision  
That serves all beings, may we honour  
The mystery surpassing our sight,  
And may we hold in our hands  
The gift of good work  
And bear it forth whole, as we  
Were borne forth by a power we praise  
To this one Earth, this homeland of all we love.

John Daniel (Resurgence No. 246)



## RESOURCES

### USEFUL WEBSITES

- [www.foe.ie](http://www.foe.ie) (environmental justice and sustainability)
- [www.sustainable.ie](http://www.sustainable.ie) (sustainability, renewable energy and more)
- [www.wdm.org.uk](http://www.wdm.org.uk) (underlying causes of poverty; campaigns - climate change, water etc.)
- [www.noticenature.ie](http://www.noticenature.ie) (biodiversity, nature competitions etc.)
- [www.cafod.org.uk/get\\_involved/livesimply](http://www.cafod.org.uk/get_involved/livesimply) (resources for schools, youth leaders and worship)
- [www.christian-ecology.org.uk](http://www.christian-ecology.org.uk) (multi-denominational UK Christian organization)
- [www.reep.org](http://www.reep.org) (Religious Education and Environment Programme)
- [www.cat.org.uk](http://www.cat.org.uk) (renewable energy, environmental building, energy efficiency, organic growing etc.)
- [www.feasta.org](http://www.feasta.org) (economic / cultural / environmental characteristics of a truly sustainable society)
- [www.greenspirit.org.uk](http://www.greenspirit.org.uk) (celebrates life as deeply connected and sacred; wisdom of spiritual traditions)
- [www.nanonaglebirthplace.ie](http://www.nanonaglebirthplace.ie)



**"The power of reason brings with it two great gifts: the freedom to choose and the responsibility to choose well. We may seize the freedom with both hands, but the responsibility may fill us with apprehension. In the words of the Benedictine poet, Ralph Wright:**

***'I fear that I am made to choose and so may lose.'***

(Margaret Silf in *Roots and Wings*)



### Further reading/study

#### BOOKS

- The Earth Charter** (enclosed)
- The Earth Charter in Action:** Towards a Sustainable World by various authors ISBN 9789068321777
- Out of Wonder:** Nellie McLoughlin (Veritas)
- Roots & Wings** – The Human Journey from a Speck of Stardust to a Spark of God: Margaret Silf.
- The Universe Story:** Thomas Berry & Brian Swimme and any other books by these authors
- The Death of Life: the Horror of Extinction:** Sean McDonagh and any other books by this author
- Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor:** Leonardo Boff
- God's Earth:** Paul Collins
- The Minding of Planet Earth:** Cardinal Cathal Daly
- A Living Island: Ireland's Responsibility to Nature:** Michael Viney
- Forthcoming Irish Bishops' Pastoral** – grounded in scripture; highlighting responsibility to respect all creation; specifically addressing climate change

#### PERIODICALS

- Voices for Justice:** Columban Fathers, Dalgan Park, Navan
- The Local Planet** – Ireland's Journal for Sustainable Living - available in Newsagents
- Resurgence:** see [www.resurgence.org](http://www.resurgence.org)
- Ethical Consumer:** see [www.ethicalconsumer.org](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org)

#### DVDs

- An Inconvenient Truth – a Global Warning (Al Gore)**
- The Unfolding Story**
- Natural Cosmology** (revelations of the soul in nature)
- Celebrate What's Right with the World** - Dewitt Jones
- The End of Suburbia**
- National Geographic**
- } available through greenspirit website

#### CDs

- Jan Novotka CDs** e.g. Melodies of the Universe; In the name of all that is, etc.
- Kathy Sherman CDs** e.g. Touch the Earth, etc.



## **INTERDEPENDENCE**

**We cannot have well humans on a sick planet.**

**We cannot have a viable human economy by  
devastating the earth's economy**

**We cannot survive if the conditions of life itself are not  
protected.**

**Not only our physical being, but our souls, our minds,  
imagination and emotions depend on our immediate  
experience of the natural world.**

**There is in the industrial process no poetry, no elevation or the  
fulfilment of mind or emotion comparable to that  
experience of the magnificence of the sea, the mountains,  
the sky, the stars at night, the flowers blooming  
in the meadows, the flight and song of the birds.**

**As the natural world diminishes in its splendour, so human life  
diminishes in its fulfilment of both the physical  
and spiritual aspects of our being.**

**Not only is it the case with humans, but with every mode of being.  
The well-being of each member of the earth community is  
dependent on the well-being of the earth itself.**

**Thomas Berry, as quoted in Resurgence, March/April 2007.**