



# LEARN PRAY ACT

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**Learn:** I was appalled to find out about the practice of “fast fashion” and even worse to see how it is connected to climate change and the waste of our natural resources. Fast fashion retailers constantly create new styles for customers with little turnover time, consuming massive amounts of resources and generating mountains of waste. This results in new, good clothing being burned, or discarded in landfills. Pope Francis speaks to this throughout his *Encyclical*, “*Laudato Si*’, *On the Care of Our Common Home*” when

he repeatedly refers to society today being a “throwaway culture.” He writes: “Each year hundreds of millions of tons of waste are generated, much of it nonbiodegradable, highly toxic and radioactive, from homes and businesses, from construction and demolition sites, from clinical, electronic and industrial sources. The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth. In many parts of the planet the elderly lament that once beautiful landscapes are now covered with rubbish. (LS 21)

Mother Earth, our common home, cries out for justice as we carelessly destroy her with our acceptance of the “fast fashion” industry.

- If you wash a polyester shirt every two weeks, it will release roughly one million microplastic fibers every year.
- The fast fashion industry is the second-biggest consumer of water and is responsible for about 10% of global carbon emissions – more than all international flights and maritime shipping combined. (Celeste Meiffren-Swango and Louis Sokolow, “The high cost of fast fashion,” PIRG, November 22, 2023.)
- Approximately 85 percent of the clothing Americans consume, 3.8 billion pounds annually, is sent to landfills as solid waste, amounting to nearly 80 pounds per American per year. (*Government Accountability Office’s (GOA) first-ever federal report on textile waste in the United States.*)
- Coach, CVS, TJ Maxx, HomeGoods and Party City have all been criticized for throwing away or destroying merchandise. (Earth.Org)
- National Geographic reported that microplastics have now been found in human brains. (2/3 by Olivia Ferrari in the NG Science report.)

Fast Fashion is just one example of our throwaway culture, but there are numerous other examples. The poor and vulnerable are a focus of Pope Francis' remarks in many places throughout *Laudato Si'*. He specifically mentions those who are "thrown away" through human trafficking, degrading living conditions, refugee status, unemployment, abortion, euthanasia of the elderly and people with disabilities. There are myriads of other reasons people may find themselves excluded from the social arena.

**Pray:** Heavenly Father, we come before You today deeply concerned about the throwaway culture' that plagues our society. People and resources are often discarded as if they have no value. We pray for a change of heart that we may see the dignity in every person and the preciousness of every gift You have given us. Guide us to live with greater intentionality, to use our resources wisely, and to embrace the responsibility of caring for creation. Help us to repair what is broken, to reuse what is possible, and to share generously with those in need. Encourage us to opt for sustainable fashion and to advocate for justice and the common good. May we become stewards of Your Earth, valuing every life and every thing, and working to build a world where no one is considered 'disposable.' In Jesus' name, Amen.

**Act:**

1. **Click [HERE](#)** to tell your governor not to let the fashion industry trash and burn clothes. PIRG is an advocate for consumers, advancing solutions to problems that affect our health, our safety and our wellbeing.
2. **Read *Laudato Si' and the Tragedy of the "Throwaway Culture."*** Lucia A. Silecchia  
  
The Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law  
<https://scholarship.law.edu/scholar/982/>
3. **Watch <https://www.dumpsterdivingmama.com/>**
4. **Make choices to change your purchasing habits:**
  - ♣ choosing to buy less
  - ♣ find second-hand clothes at thrift stores or online [resellers](#)
  - ♣ repair your existing clothes
  - ♣ repurpose old clothes into new household items.