



## FASHION



In 2015, the global textiles and clothing industry was responsible for the consumption of 79 billion cubic metres of water, 715 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and 92 million tons of waste. This impact is often felt in third countries, as most production takes place abroad. The production of raw materials, spinning them into fibres, weaving fabrics and dyeing require enormous amounts of water and chemicals, including pesticides for growing raw materials such as cotton. [European Parliament briefing](#) EU citizens bought 6.4 million tonnes of new clothing (12.66 kg per person) in 2015. Between 1996 and 2012, the amount of clothes bought per person in the EU increased by 40 %. At the same time, more than 30 % of clothes in Europeans' wardrobes have not been used for at least a year. Once discarded, over half the garments are not recycled, but end up in mixed household waste and are subsequently sent to incinerators or landfill where they release methane. [European Environment Agency \(EEA\)](#)

### Raw Materials

Cotton, which accounts for more than 43 % of all fibres used for clothes is considered especially problematic because it requires huge quantities of land, water, fertilisers and pesticides. Silk has an especially detrimental effect regarding depletion of natural resources and global warming and wool contributes to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. [European Clothing Action Plan \(ECAP\) report](#). Polyester is made of fossil fuels and is non-biodegradable. Unlike cotton, it has a lower water footprint, has to be washed at lower temperatures, dries quickly and hardly needs ironing. However, one load of laundry of polyester clothes (also nylon and acrylic) can discharge 700 000 microplastic fibres, which release toxins into the environment and can end up in the human food chain. Estimates show that every year approximately half a million tonnes of plastic microfibres from washing clothes end up in the ocean. [Pulse of the Fashion Industry report](#)

### Fast Fashion

Epitomised by the multinational retail chains, fast fashion relies on mass production, low prices and large volumes of sales. Fast fashion constantly offers new styles to buy, as the average number of collections released by European apparel companies per year has gone from two in 2000 to five in 2011, with, for instance, Zara offering 24 new clothing collections each year, and H&M between 12 and 16. This has led consumers to see cheap clothing items increasingly as perishable goods that are 'nearly disposable', and that are thrown away after wearing them only seven or eight times. [European Clothing Action Plan](#)

### Church Teaching

**The ecological crisis a common responsibility** - The profound sense that the earth is "suffering" is also shared by those who do not profess our faith in God. Indeed, the increasing devastation of the world of nature is apparent to all. It results from the behaviour of people who show a callous disregard for the hidden, yet perceivable requirements of the order and harmony which govern nature itself .

[Pope John Paul II Message of His Holiness for the celebration of the WORLD DAY OF PEACE January 1, 1990](#)



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**Care for creation:** The relationship between human activity and global warming must be constantly monitored for “the climate is a good that must be protected”.

[Vatican’s Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, para 470](#)

**Climate As A Common Good:** The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all. Humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production and consumption, in order to combat this warming or at least the human causes which produce or aggravate it [Laudato Si para 23](#) [Social Doctrine of the Church, para 470](#)

**Global Inequality:** We have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. [Laudato Si para 49](#)

### Ideas for Action

- Small behavioural changes, such as reducing washing temperature, washing a full load, avoiding tumble-drying, purchasing eco-friendly fibres and donating clothes that are no longer used should be adopted. We can also lower the environmental impact of our garments by washing our clothes less frequently (and airing them instead) and avoiding unnecessary ironing.
- [10 Ways to reduce your fashion footprint](#)
- [Learn how to shop ethically](#)
- [A 5 step guide to a sustainable wardrobe](#)
- [How to recycle clothing and accessories with Earth911](#)
- [Swap shop for clothes](#)

### Liturgical Resources

- [Sisters of Mercy](#) Laudato Si and Sisters of Mercy's Critical Concerns
- [Peacemeal](#). Liturgy ideas for sharing a meal
- [Season of Creation](#). An excellent booklet containing liturgies on the environment, including biodiversity
- [Caring for God's Creation](#). A downloadable booklet produced by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops with suggestions for liturgies
- [Greening Worship](#). A web page from EcoCongregation with lots of useful suggestions for worship.
- [Liturgical, Prayer and Spiritual Resources](#). Splendid resources page from the Global Catholic Climate Movement