

# Towards a world without single-use plastics

From DENNIS HORTON, Mercy Global Action New Zealand

To mark Earth Day and World Oceans Day this year, the Cosmology and Eco-Justice representative on Mercy Global Action Aotearoa New Zealand developed posters on the theme of reducing plastic pollution, drawing attention to practical steps to help in this goal.

Sisters of Mercy in New Zealand have identified a range of practical actions for themselves and their partners in ministry to adopt. These include:

# Using honeywraps instead of plastic foil, to cover food in the fridge and to wrap sandwiches and other foodstuff. Honeywraps are reusable food wraps, made from organic cotton treated with beeswax, which may be hand-washed and used for a year or so. (Visit [www.honeywrap.co.nz](http://www.honeywrap.co.nz) for details).

# Using paper bags for household rubbish; wrapping rubbish in newspaper.

# Placing used soft plastic in collection bins at supermarkets.

# Using aluminium or stainless steel water bottles; buying these as gifts.

# Using reusable fabric shopping bags, rather than one-off plastic bags.

# Keeping string bags for buying vegetables and fruit.

# Sitting down with others in the household to plan strategies for reducing plastic use.

In the rural town where this MGA representative lives, women have volunteered to make fabric bags which are available at the local supermarket for customers who have neglected to bring their own shopping bag. Labelled as 'boomerang bags', these may be borrowed and returned later to the supermarket, which has announced its decision soon to discontinue the use of one-off plastic bags.

The MGA Aotearoa team is to meet in August with a member of New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, charged with contacting faith-based groups with an interest in climate change.

The meeting will also include representatives of Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand, which is committed to supporting Pacific Islands communities affected by rising sea levels.