

# Earth-friendly Household Audit of Our Stuff, Our Activities, Our Celebrations and Vacations



A household resource from  
the Laudato Si' Team at St. Thomas More Church

based on *Living in God's Economy: A Domestic Church Resource for Gospel Living* by  
Mary Sharon Moore, 2009, 2016, and used with permission

Our world is **drowning in stuff** (just look in the bellies of whales, or birds, or the trash-pit belly of Mother Earth). We don't want to *imagine* our neighborhoods without regular garbage pick-up.

Christ-centered households—which we are—bear a responsibility to **live lighter on the Earth**, to carry the burden of love for Mother Earth which Pope Francis calls “our common home.”

In his 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis reminds us of the obvious: “Everything is connected”—a phrase he uses 14 times in *Laudato Si'*, which means we need to pay attention! **“It cannot be emphasized enough how everything is connected”** (paragraph 138).

Here’s some of what Pope Francis says:

“When we speak of the ‘environment,’ what we really mean is a **relationship existing between nature and the society which lives in it**. Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. ... We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with **one complex crisis which is both social and environmental**” (paragraph 139).

Our “environmental problems **cannot be separated** from ... human, family, work-related, and urban contexts,” he writes (paragraph 141).

We use our environment—and the tons of stuff it gives us—to “express our identity,” but “such **overstimulation** makes it difficult to find ourselves integrated and happy” (paragraph 147).

## Let's bring it home

Here are six simple words to guide you in a household audit of your stuff, your activities, your special celebrations, and your vacations. Whether you are a household of many or a household of one, these six simple words are for you!

1. **Rethink** = Rethink your household’s wants and needs—the two are not the same! Then rethink your shopping list. And if you “impulse shop,” rethink that habit, too!
2. **Reduce** = Buying stuff “on sale” is not a bargain if you don’t need it. And cheaper seldom means better. Purchase what you need, and buy what is durable and reusable.
3. **Reuse/Repair** = Think before you toss. Wash or mend what is still serviceable. Don’t be afraid to use “last year’s stuff.”
4. **Share** = If we have stuff in our closets, cupboards, and drawers that is still in its packaging six months later, who might actually need what we overbought?
5. **Upcycle** = Hey, be creative! [HGTV.com](http://HGTV.com) features 25 ways to upcycle your old stuff. Or use tree debris or other found things of nature for touches of nature in your home.
6. **Recycle** = If you really need to toss your stuff, make sure you toss responsibly, and Mother Earth will thank you!

**“This is what we do because ... this is who we are!”**

The household audit starts on the next page.

## Our Household Audit of Excess Stuff

1. In the **left column** below, please write the room or part of the house where you are looking for excess stuff.
2. In the **center column**, please list the excess things you find—things you no longer use or want. Include places like the basement, the attic, closets, the garage, and any off-site storage places.
3. In the **right column**, please discuss the questions, and then sort your excess stuff into piles. Children who are old enough to have an opinion about things can contribute to the solutions!

Room or Space	Our Excess Stuff	Our Solutions (write ideas on next page)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How can we rethink what we actually need?</li></ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How can we reduce purchasing—especially shopping just because it's fun?</li></ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What can we reuse rather than discard?</li></ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What can we share with others?</li></ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What stuff can we upcycle and turn into something new?</li></ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What can we responsibly recycle?</li></ul>

## Our Practical Actions to Simplify Our Excess Stuff

Idea 1	
Idea 2	
Idea 3	
Idea 4	
Idea 5	
Idea 6	
Idea 7	
Idea 8	
Idea 9	
Idea 10	
Idea 11	
Idea 12	

More ideas ...

## Our Household Audit of Special Celebrations

1. In the **left column** below, please write the name of the household's celebration.
2. In the **center column**, please list the stuff you usually buy to celebrate—including single-use utensils, plates and cups, “party favors,” and other stuff.
3. In the **right column**, please answer the questions, and then discern how you can simplify to focus on the reason for the celebration—a person, a feast day, a civic celebration. Children who are old enough to have an opinion about things can contribute to the solutions!

Special Celebrations	Stuff We Buy to Celebrate	How We Can Simplify Our Special Celebrations
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What stuff do we actually need in order to celebrate the person or event in a special way?</li></ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How can we celebrate in the most Earth-friendly zero-waste way?</li></ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How might we shift from “buying stuff” for the person to sharing stories, song, simple family rituals, or doing good deeds in the community?</li></ul>

## Our Practical Actions to Simplify Our Special Celebrations

Idea 1	
Idea 2	
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Idea 5	
Idea 6	
Idea 7	
Idea 8	
Idea 9	
Idea 10	
Idea 11	
Idea 12	

More ideas ...

## Our Household Audit of Vacations, Breaks, and Use of the Environment

1. In the **left column** below, please write the name of this year's typical vacations and seasonal breaks.
2. In the **center column**, please list how this vacation or break impacts the environment—such as use of fossil fuel, or single-use plastics, or luxurious use of water, electricity, and food-on-the-go wrappings.
3. In the **right column**, please answer the questions, and then discern how you can simplify these outings by respecting nature's resources. Children who are old enough to have an opinion about things can contribute to the solutions!

Vacation or Break	How We Use the Environment	How We Can Simplify Our Impact on the Environment
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How does our means of travel and the distance we travel impact the environment?</li></ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What steps can we take before and during travel in order to vacation with zero waste?</li></ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How might we “stay-cation” to explore and enjoy nearby nature and not extract from it?</li></ul>

## Our Practical Actions to Simplify Our Vacations, Breaks, and Use of the Environment

Idea 1	
Idea 2	
Idea 3	
Idea 4	
Idea 5	
Idea 6	
Idea 7	
Idea 8	
Idea 9	
Idea 10	
Idea 11	
Idea 12	

More ideas ...

A very partial list of local **organizations that accept** clean, usable clothing, household items, furniture, and electronics (depending on the organization's mission and needs):

BRING Recycling  
Catholic Community Services  
Glenwood Transfer Station  
Goodwill Industries

NextStep Recycling  
St. Vincent de Paul Society of Lane County  
Salvation Army  
White Bird Clinic

Search for more online: Lane County recycling, and local antique, thrift, and new-to-you stores.  
Download the Lane County Recycling Guide on the Laudato Si' page at [uonewman.org](http://uonewman.org).

**Coming soon ... Good-to-Go Bags  
for purchase at St. Thomas More  
Designed for us by Mitra,  
St. Vinnie's "Upcycle Queen"**

- Durable light-weight sling bag
- Made from upcycled fabrics
- With durable plastic plate and cup
- Stainless steel utensils
- Upcycled colorful cloth napkin
- Very cool, and trending soon at Newman!

bag photo goes here



The Laudato Si' Group at St. Thomas More University Church is dedicated to study, education, and action in the cause of "care for the Earth and for the poor," in the spirit of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si': Care for Our Common Home*.

The group usually meets on the first and third Sundays, following the 11:00 a.m. Mass (12:15 to 1:30 p.m.).

Learn more about our group, our activities, and download useful resources on our Laudato Si' page at [uonewman.org](http://uonewman.org).