**Lent 2022 Pledge for the Planet**

The members of the Circuit Eco Group will share some of their thoughts over the next 6 weeks. Many of them have made a ‘pledge for the planet’; taking a particular area of their lives and make it more sustainable. They will share their highs and lows and hopefully encourage you to make a few simple changes in your household too. Maybe you could make one change this Lent..?

**Pledge for the Planet – one ‘less’ thing at a time.**

My original Planet Pledge, which I set at the beginning of the year was to, over the course of 2022, try to make my bathroom plastic free of consumer products. Not all in one go but item by item; to make conscious changes to buying products which are healthier and better for the environment. It’s quite a challenge but as I look around my bathroom, I can see progress being made and we’re only 3 months into the year.

There’s so much we can do, individually, for the environment and a lot of that is about the power of consumer choice and our buying habits. We can research and advocate for sustainable, ethical, environmentally-friendly choices which is all a step in the right direction but ultimately, one of the most effective things we can do, is to buy less.

A few years ago, I watched a documentary and read a number of books on minimalism which both horrified and inspired me to think about my own possessions and spending habits. I like buying things as much as the next person – particularly books, and well-designed homeware and furniture – but there’s a limit to the amount we actually need/use.

Inspired by what I’d read I started a personal challenge called **the Joy of One**, where I would buy just one thing for myself every month (this of course excluded things I actually needed like food, toiletries, petrol, bills etc etc.) but for everything else, I was limited to one thing. I didn’t manage to do it for a whole year but I got quite far and I saw the benefits.

It helped me reduce what I consumed of the worlds precious recourses, it helped me save money and it helped me think more carefully about what I wanted to buy, avoiding impulse buying. Asking myself questions such as, “Do I really *want* this? Do I really *need* this? Can I *live without* it? Can I find a *better quality* product by doing a bit of research? Is there a more ethical option? Do I want this particular company to benefit from my hard-earned money? And it helped me appreciate more the one thing I did buy each month.

There wasn’t a spending limit, one month I spent £200 on a set of speakers (music is a big part of my life so I didn’t see the value in buying the cheapest which wouldn’t last as long or sound as good). Another month I spent £10 on a new book. But the point is I was reining in that feeling of privilege, of being able to earn an income each month and spend my disposable income on anything I wanted at any time, and just collecting more and more stuff. Trying to appreciate what I already had.

So my Planet Pledge this Easter is to reset my Joy of One challenge. Refocus my brain to change my consumer spending habits and start to re-ask those key questions ‘do I really need this?’. I would encourage you to do the same and give it a try. It’s definitely not easy but so satisfying!

[If this sounds like something you’re interested in and would like to give it ago but feel a bit unsure, I’m very happy to talk with anyone about my experiences.]

Prayer

Thank you, God, for everything that we already have. You provide everything we need to thrive and yet we put our focus on accumulating more and more stuff that we don’t actually need. Help us to think more carefully about our consumer choices, about who and where we shop, and how often. Help us to support one another in this challenge to appreciate what we already have and change our habits so they are more in line with the equality and sustainability.

Amen