



Sample Sermon/Introductory Talk [Please adapt this talk as you feel necessary for your audience. This talk is aimed at parishes or groups to introduce livesimply and encourage them to become involved in the challenge.]

The world is such a beautiful place. If we do not stop and look around once in a while, we can sometimes forget what a fantastic world God has given us.

God creates such beauty, and such amazing people with so many different languages, cultures and traditions. And it was created for all of us to take care of and to share, not just for a few of us.

As part of our Christian faith, we are asked to look after all creation and to care for all of the human family, wherever and whoever they are. In Genesis, God entrusts us to be stewards of earth, utilizing it, but also respecting it for its own sake and for future generations. We are part of creation, formed out of the earth, and dependent on it and each other for the rest of our existence.

Sometimes, however, it seems as though we have a lot to do to live up to God's intentions.

We have scarred the world with war and threatened the very existence of our planet by endangering our environment. Global warming, pollution, and abuse jeopardize the future of the environmental system, and the drastic effects of climate change, as witnessed in disasters like Hurricane Katrina in the United States in 2004 and the intense droughts in East Africa this year are no longer distant or elusive phenomena.

We have also created immense poverty and hunger in some parts of the world through the greed and love of excess. Unsustainable consumption has continued to fuel global warming, and the selfish actions of individuals and corporations has stunted the global economy, bringing areas in both the developed and developing world into a severe economic recession. As a result, those who have very little are left with even less.

In an age of globalisation, our actions, while not intending to harm anyone, disproportionately affect the poor and marginalised. The poorest people in the world certainly did not do anything to merit environmental disarray or severe poverty, and yet they feel its consequences most significantly.

In his encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, or *On the Development of People*, Pope Paul VI wrote,

“The hungry nations of the world cry out to the peoples blessed with abundance. And the Church, cut to the quick by this cry, asks each and everyone to hear the plea of his brothers and sisters and answer it lovingly.”

He wrote this over forty years ago, and yet, in spite of the urgency of his message back then,

poverty and hunger still exist today, in this world that God created for all of us to share. Just a few still have too much, whilst far too many go without even the basics of life.

How are we to respond? We must take a fresh look at the ways in which we live, and reflect upon how we can live more simply, sustainably, and in solidarity with the poor in order to reverse apparent injustice. The future of the earth depends upon it.

[*Add if you consider it appropriate*] To live simply is not a simple matter. In fact it can be extremely difficult to live simply without the support of others. We are constantly bombarded through the media and from peers with messages to consume more and more. The frailty of human nature often means that we need the support of a group to take us away from following this type of lifestyle, a group to explain the needs and benefits of living simply and to offer guidance about how we can achieve these changes in our lives.

livesimply is the actual name for the network being developed by Catholic groups in Ireland. It is a major new initiative to which many organisations and groups in Ireland are signing up. It challenges us to reflect, celebrate and take action for justice and its message is clear: God calls us to live simply, sustainably and in solidarity with people in poverty.

The intention of *livesimply* is far reaching: to transform our communities in such a way that human dignity is respected and everyone can reach their full potential. It questions whether our priority is wealth or justice and invites us to make an option for the poor because the injustice of poverty impoverishes us all as human beings.

If you would like to know more about *livesimply* or if you would be interested in developing a *livesimply* grouping in our parish then please contact me/ _____ (nominated lay/ Religious person in the parish) after the mass. I/ they will be waiting outside. A website www.livesimply.ie and some published material in the back of the church will also explain more about the *livesimply* network and give you some practical instructions about how to lead a simpler life more in tune with the world as it is and more respectful of God's Creation.