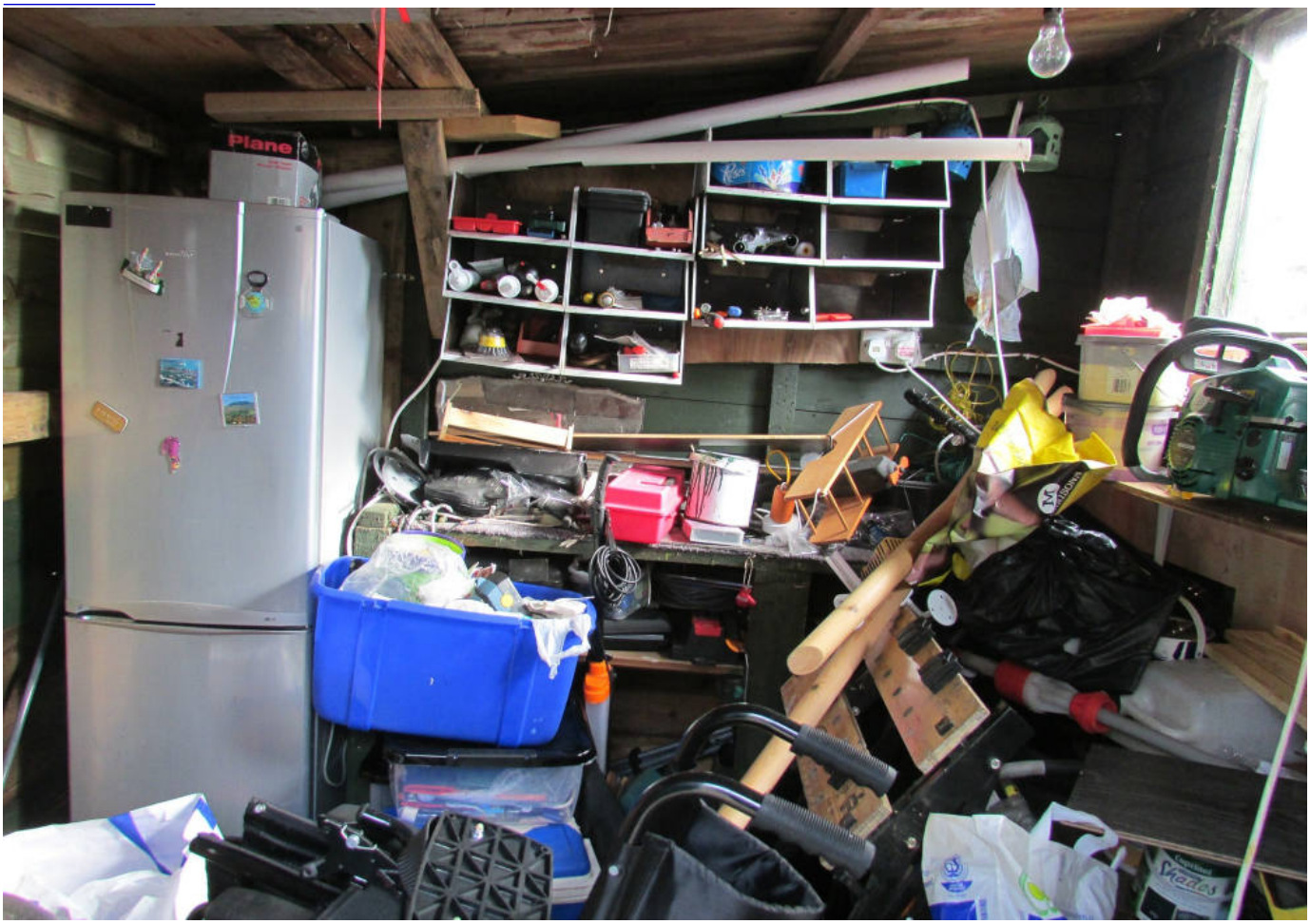
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EarthBeat



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by Brenna Davis

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December 14, 2020

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Third week of Advent—Consumption

Day 16: Monday, Dec. 14

REFLECT

> If environmental decline results when people have either too little or too much, we must ask ourselves: How much is enough? What level of consumption can the earth support? When does consumption cease to add appreciably to human satisfaction?
>
> As I came to know that point of "enough" I experienced a new sense of freedom and growing power. I was no longer subject to the dictates of our consumer culture to buy more, more, more. The quality of my life rose higher and higher while I was spending less and less …
>
> I began to see the difficulty in creating a world that reflects the social justice teachings of Jesus if we, as a nation, are unwilling to confront our own levels of consumption, our own gluttony. In about 600 BCE the Greek philosopher Thales said, "Only if there is neither wealth nor immoderate poverty in a nation, can justice be said to prevail."
>
> Evy McDonald, "Spending Money as if Life Really Mattered" from *Simpler Living, Compassionate Life: A Christian Perspective*

How much is enough? This week as we reflect on simple living and consumption, this is a question that we must take to prayer and honestly evaluate in our own lives. How much food, how much clothing, how much air travel do we need to sustain ourselves? The answer will be different for each person, but for most people living in the United States today, the answer is less than we have now.

Consider the following questions as you contemplate how much is enough in your own life:

- Do you feel that you have a good sense of how much is enough in your own life?

- Are there areas in your life that you may be able to live with less that would benefit the planet? Consider clothing purchases, food, technology or other areas where you practice conspicuous or unconscious consumption.
- Do you ever use shopping as a coping mechanism or a way to feel momentarily happy and fulfilled? If so, what is a different activity that you could substitute?
- Consider an item that you were excited about purchasing. Has it provided lasting happiness? Do you still use this item, or is it possibly time to pass it on to someone else? Does the item align with your values in terms of how it was produced and its impact on the earth?

ACT

Visit the Advent Simplicity Calendar for an opportunity to calculate how many Earths it would take to sustain your lifestyle if everyone lived like you.

Simple Advent, Abundant Life

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