

A Christmas Wishlist for the Earth from Caring for Our Common Home

Many of us are looking forward to the holidays with sadness at the very least, as we may not be able to gather with family or friends or travel. But, although our festivities may look very different this year, we might consider reframing our view of what it means to celebrate Christ's birth in 2020. For despite the fact that the days in Advent will definitely be unfamiliar, they are still Holy days.

So what do we do to keep the spirit of Christmas alive? How do we keep these days holy? How do we celebrate and stay safe?

Pope Francis, during this 5th anniversary of Laudato Si has asked us to experience an ecological spiritual conversion. This is the perfect year to do that.

Grab a cup of mulled cider, wassail or cocoa and read about how Pope Francis came to realize our Catholic responsibility to be guardians of all things with which we are one. Or, look at The Time is Now by Joan Chittester or check out advent Bible verses focusing on caring for creation at catholicclimate.org

Then, make this Christmas more simple.

1. **Write an old fashioned card** telling people you won't see this year how the person is a gift in your life and what you will miss most about not being able to see them this year. Order those cards from paperculture.com, Arbor Day Foundation or treecards.com, as each purchase will go toward the planting of trees. Order stamps early online which can be delivered to you. No need to risk going to the post office, and your purchase will help to repair the damage done by cuts made to its budget.
2. **Shop from home**. Maybe you have received a gift that doesn't suit you, but someone else might like? Maybe there is something you would like a child to have, perhaps a family heirloom? Instead of leaving it for an inheritance, maybe you could give it this year and enjoy being able to see how much the person enjoys it.
3. **Purchase an ornament online whose proceeds go toward planting more trees**. Try The National Wildlife Foundation, Basicspirit.com, Seagull Pewter and Plow and Hearth.
4. **Give someone a really nice water bottle or coffee mug to help cut down on the use of plastic.** Yeti products are the "gold standard"; they are pricey but most effective. They don't taste metallic, can be for both hot and cold beverages. and keep proper temperatures for as long as 48 hours! However, other brands may be just as good.

Next, shop local with delivery or curbside pickup services. Many of us during the pandemic have shopped online, but the transportation industry leaves one of the largest carbon footprints. Therefore, shipping is environmentally harmful.

1. Mail a funny or festive sock containing a small treasure, such as a gift certificate to a favorite local restaurant that had to close temporarily during Covid.
2. Order online from local businesses -- send a chocolate pizza from Marcellus Chocolate Pizza Company or candy from Speech's candy.
3. Shop small local shops that may provide curbside shopping. Try The Gift Box or The Wren's Den. Both have Facebook pages that feature merchandise and contact information
4. Apples from Beak and Skiff (they ship) to make a family Christmas more festive.

Or, you could donate to offset someone's carbon footprint.
The average American emits 16 tons of carbon emissions annually by driving, flying and living in the modern world. When you donate to Verified Carbon Standard, your donation will be an investment in an environmental project to reduce the same emissions elsewhere. You can trust that these are some of the best projects currently.

You could start a new Zoom family tradition such as singing carols, which can be recorded and shared with those who couldn't join you this year.,

Finally, support Fair Trade missions by shopping at the Spiritual Renewal Center's Hand-to-Hand Gift Shop. The Gift Shop is open during the week on Tuesdays from 10 am– 12 pm and on Thursdays from 12 -2 pm. Beginning Sunday, December 6 it will be open to All Saints parishioners after each Mass. **You can also support our Villanueva Ministry by buying Peg Barnett's Crafts.** Her beautiful crafts are available at Upstate Sewing and Vacuum Center, 2628 Erie Blvd. East.

These are all safe ways to help you celebrate and care for God's gift, our beautiful earth. So even one of these choices can keep you healthy and make you feel good about giving back to our planet.

Merry Covid Christmas!

