

## *“Green” your Advent and Christmas*

### **Save Energy & Reduce Waste:**

**Christmas tree:** cut or buy from a local tree farm; after use, cut off branches and use to mulch garden beds, especially over bulbs, to keep ground frozen and protect them.

**Christmas lights,** use less lighting or switch to long-lasting LED lights to save electricity, produce less CO2.

**Wrapping & packaging:** [reduce extra trash that our towns pay to incinerate]

- Re-use wrapping paper or only buy recycled content paper
- Save and use Sunday comic pages
- Help kids decorate grocery bags with ink stamps, markers, stickers
- Re-useable gift bags and boxes
- Fabric pieces or sewn gift bags

**Gift Name Drawings:** draw names in family or group to lessen number of things purchased.

**Gift certificates:** for restaurants, museums, plays, sports events, concerts, train or bus travel. Many can be ordered on line.

**Give the gift of yourself:** give a written commitment of time and service –tutor a student or English language learner; help someone with shopping or cooking meals, give rides, read to someone, etc.

### **Gifts that help those in need and protect the environment:**

- **Give to The Diaper Bank,** so infants and toddlers in low-income families in New Haven, Hartford and Bridgeport have this essential, costly necessity: PO Box 9017, New Haven CT 06532, [www.thediaperbank.org](http://www.thediaperbank.org)
- **Donation in someone’s name to Catholic Relief Service** [for food, clean water, shelter, farm supplies, reforestation] and use their gift catalogue for **Fair Trade** gifts <http://gifts.crs.org>
- **Donation in someone’s name** of a goat, duck, water buffalo or mosquito net through Catholic Relief Services <https://gifts.crs.org/>
- **Membership in or gift to local park, land trust or river group,** to protect species and habitat in your town or area.
- **Adopt an animal or habitat** through Defenders of Wildlife [adopt a penguin family, river otters, elephants, endangered sea turtles, a whale][www.defenders.org](http://www.defenders.org) or The Nature Conservancy to protect coral reefs and natural areas all over the world. [www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org)

### **Support local justice, hospitality and educational organizations:**

- Support a **Catholic Worker house in Hartford or New Haven; BirthRight; local soup kitchens, food pantries and homeless shelters.**
- **Contribute to scholarships** for Catholic schools, <http://www.facshartford.org/> to support art and music programs, summer camps for children who couldn’t otherwise participate.

**Gift ideas that are lasting, useful, & help lower your environmental impact:**

- **Energy saving: CFLs** \*\*\*[ *recycle to keep mercury out of air and water: take used bulbs to town Hazwaste collection or to Home Depot, kiosk at Return Desk.*] or new **LED light bulbs.**
- **Power strips for electronics:** turn off to reduce “vampire” energy users- computers, DVD player, chargers, etc. which draw power all the time.
- **Rechargeable batteries** for kids toys [*recycle batteries at Hazwaste or Best Buy*]
- **Fire extinguishers** for home and car; **CO2 monitors** for home
- **Pitcher or faucet water filters,** and **take-along BPA-free water bottles** and coffee mugs, to eliminate buying bottled water, throw-away coffee cups.
- **Low-flow shower heads**
- **Homemade and locally made or grown gifts:** jams, honey, cheeses, pottery, etc. Make a gift basket of local goodies, organic mixes, CT-made products. Include a vegetarian cookbook; [eating less meat saves water, energy, cholesterol]
- **Towels and clothing made of organic cotton** [ no pesticides or dyes]
- **Plants, garden tools**
- **Basket of green cleaning products**
- **Active things for kids and adults, with helmets for safety:** scooter, roller blades, ice skates; trails guide to CT -- exercise and enjoy your environment!

**Change your expectations and lifestyle :**

**As Pope John Paul often said, life in Christ is about BEing more, not Having more. What gifts can we be and give, in Jesus’ name, to increase love, hope, joy, new life, peace and justice in the world?**