

# CREATION CARE TIPS

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS

The entire material universe speaks of God's love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains – everything is, as it were, a caress of God. All of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family, a sublime communion which fills us with a sacred, affectionate and humble respect. Encountering God does not mean fleeing from this world or turning our back on nature.

There is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions. Along with the importance of little everyday gestures, social love moves us to devise larger strategies to halt environmental degradation and to encourage a “culture of care” which permeates all of society.

– Excerpts from Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si'*

## CREATION CARE IN THE COLUMBUS DIOCESE: OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP - GROVE CITY

Our Lady of Perpetual Help – Grove City was able to significantly reduce the waste stream at its 2019 festival, composting 1,088 gallons and recycling 1,616 gallons of material. Overall, 86% of waste was diverted from the landfill for this event attended by about 5,000 people. The parish Creation Care Team attributes the success to a dedicated team of approximately 100 volunteers aged 7 to 85 and participation from most festival vendors. The team, which received positive feedback from festival goers, used the opportunity to educate both the parish and local community about environmentally-friendly practices and has already identified areas for improvement next year.



## **FIRST STEP: REDUCE AND RE-USE**

The easiest way to minimize the waste we create, in order of importance, is to reduce our purchase of unnecessary things, re-use as many items as possible, and recycle materials that can no longer be used. Twenty years ago, bottled water was unheard of in the U.S. Using tap water rather than bottled water can save money on both the purchase and disposal. Many Society of St. Vincent de Paul councils collect gently-used furniture and electronics for those in need or the parish might welcome donations for the annual rummage sale. Habitat for Humanity, Goodwill, and a Craigslist "curb alert" (an item is placed at the curb and listed for \$0) are other ways of extending the lives of items you no longer need.



## **SECOND STEP: RECYCLE**

While many items can be recycled, not all can be placed in a traditional recycling bin or drop location. The reason is that some items are toxic and others need a special process for successful recycling. For example, old electronics such as computers, cellular phones, stereos, and televisions must to be taken to an electronics recycling center because they contain heavy metals. Some electronics stores, such as Best Buy, accept these items for recycling. Another example is batteries, which often contain lead and should not be sent to landfills. Many battery supply companies provide free recycling of used batteries. In Central Ohio, SWACO and the City of Columbus offer online lists of companies that recycle various items. Other resources include SouthEastern Ohio recycling (a joint venture of many southeast Ohio counties) and Licking County recycling.



## **TAKE A STEP TOGETHER: REDUCE THE WASTE FROM YOUR PARISH GATHERINGS AND EVENTS**

Weddings, baptisms, potlucks, fish fries, and other parish events can generate a lot of paper and plastic waste. Recyclable, biodegradable, and reusable utensils, cups, and plates can greatly alleviate this and make every parish festivity a sustainable one. Using reusable materials can also cut the cost of these events in the long run. Many parishioners do not know that refuse removal has a cost and that the parish can save money by reducing the amount of garbage that is generated and placed in the dumpster to be hauled to a landfill.