

## GREEN NOTES FROM OSP GREEN TEAM: GREEN NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

*“The pace of consumption, waste and environmental change has so stretched the planet’s capacity that our contemporary lifestyle, unsustainable as it is, can only precipitate catastrophes, such as those which even now periodically occur in different areas of the world. The effects of the present imbalance can only be reduced by our decisive action, here and now. We need to reflect on our accountability before those who will have to endure the dire consequences.”*

– Pope Francis, *Laudato Si—Praise Be to You: On Care for our Common Home*

The word “resolution” has many meanings: it can refer to something decided on; firmness of purpose and determination in a person; the solution to a problem; and in science, it is a measure used to describe the sharpness and clarity of an image or picture. At this time of year, as you think about New Year’s resolutions, consider incorporating sustainability into your commitments. With firmness of purpose and sharp focus, you can impact our environment, reduce the present imbalance, and make a difference for this earth, our only home. Here are some options to think about as the New Year approaches.

- Reduce your use of single use plastics. Keep a foldaway nylon shopping bag with you when you shop. Ask for paper bags at the grocery, or bring your own reusable bags. Many stores will allow you to bag your own bags if you pack them yourself. Use reusable cloth produce bags to bring home produce. Carry your own takeout containers to restaurants as an alternative to Styrofoam, which can’t be recycled in the Chicago area. On outings, bring a reusable water bottle, and refill from drinking fountains and other on the go sources.
- Moderate your thermostat settings to lower your home heating and cooling energy use; you can be comfortable at around 68 degrees in winter, 78 degrees in summer. If you are away for long periods, adjust accordingly. A programmable thermostat can make these adjustments easier.



- Clean with non-toxic materials whenever possible. A little white vinegar, lemon and baking soda will clean many home surfaces.
- Fix leaky faucets. A faucet that drips just one drop per second can waste over 3000 gallons of water per year! That’s not even counting the lost cost of heating the water, when the drip comes from a hot water tap.
- Drive with a light foot on the gas pedal. If you drive at 65 rather than 75 mph on the highway, you cut your gasoline consumption by around 15 percent.
- Cut your use of vampire, or idle load electricity. Vampire electricity is power consumed when a device is off, to

allow the device to respond quickly when turned on; it accounts for up to 20% of home power use. Two tips to reduce vampire electricity: 1) purchase energy star appliances, which are energy efficient to begin with; and 2) connect electronic devices like printers and computers with a power strip, and shut the power off overnight.

- Buy local and eat local. Let’s look forward to the return of farmer’s markets next summer. In the meantime, patronize restaurants that showcase local growers and foods.



Hope is on the horizon, as we see the possibility of the end of the pandemic through the development of vaccines. Let’s face the current ecological crisis with resolution: commitment to making changes in our everyday lives; determination to stick to our decisions; solutions that will bring about a more sustainable world; and, as Pope Francis says, “grace to feel profoundly joined to everything that is.”



### OSP GREEN TEAM WELCOMES YOU!

Are you inspired by the message of *Laudato Si*? Want to be a faithful steward of our common home? OSP Green Team shares your inspiration. To learn more, contact Kayla Jackson at (312) 798-2399 or [kaylaj@oldstpats.org](mailto:kaylaj@oldstpats.org)

