



STEWARDS OF OUR EARTH All of God's Creation

Social Justice Committee, Holy Cross Parish, Mt. Airy, January 1, 2023

Composting: A Gift from You to Our Planet

Thinking of a new year's resolution you can make? You may want to consider composting.

What is Composting?

"Composting is the next evolution of recycling. When you compost, you sort out organic materials (food waste, yard waste, household waste) at home that can be turned into a nutrient rich fertilizer.

Why Should I Compost?

The average American person throws away 30 pounds of garbage a week. Of that, at least 20% is organic waste that could be composted.

What's more, when the organic materials find their way into a landfill and attempt to break down naturally, they cannot. Instead, they release methane gas, which is a greenhouse gas approximately 20 times more powerful than carbon dioxide.

By composting and re-directing, that organic material is breaking down naturally and can be applied back onto land, helping enhance soil quality, prevent erosion, and increase water retention.

The amount of trash we create here in the US is a growing issue, as **we top the world in trash by producing close to 250 million TONS each year.** This equates to approximately 4.4 pounds per person, per day. Tackling an issue that enormous seems impossible but taking organic materials out of your trash is a great place to start...." (*Mother Compost, founded in 2018 by Gwenn Nolan, daughter-in-law of parishioners John and Mary Nolan*) [Check out this clip from NBC10 News.](#)

Parishioner Steve Monheim has been composting since 2000. His compost is a simple plastic bin about 4 feet tall and 3 feet wide with side air vents, an open bottom, a locking lid, and a bottom trap door to shovel out the rich compost that is returned to his garden and yard twice a year. One or two trips per week to his compost bin allows him to reduce his trashcan pick-up to once a month. One tip he provides is to mix or layer the wet vegetable matter with dried materials like leaves and shredded paper. Mixing in a thin layer of soil or composted matter on to the top helps to inoculate the new materials with those microbes that aid in breaking down the new additions to the pile. For Steve, composting is a learning experience that he finds extremely rewarding. Steve is an inspiring steward of our earth!

Old St. Joseph's (OSJ) Church in Philadelphia demonstrates the power of composting food wastes in the parish community. Using a 5-gallon compost bucket in the rectory kitchen, parish cook Marie Nowak collected 520 pounds/year of food waste, which yielded 312 pounds of organic soil, 230 pounds of CO₂ pulled out of the atmosphere, and 63 pounds of carbon stored in the soil.

Bill Stigliani (Professor Emeritus of Environmental Science & Sustainability and Chair of OSJ's Care for Creation Committee) calculated that if 20% of OSJ families (254 people) composted their food wastes, the results would be 27.7 tons/year of CO₂e landfill emissions avoided and 12.3 tons/year of CO₂ sequestered out of the atmosphere. The total benefit would be **an overall reduction of 40 tons of CO₂e** (carbon dioxide equivalent which includes CO₂ and other greenhouse gases). Now that's an impact for the good of our planet!

Think of the impact you could have with this one new year's resolution.