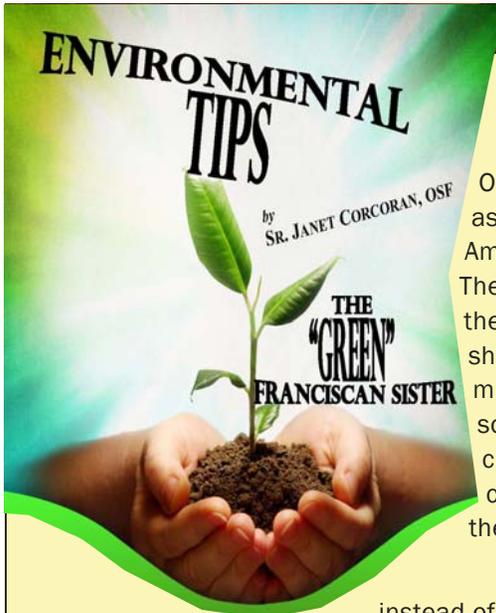


## THE "GREEN" FRANCISCAN SISTER



**A**s St. Francis had a reverence and respect for all of creation, may we, too, continue to be respectful of our environment.

One way to be respectful is the purchase of environmentally-friendly tea bags such as organic ones, chlorine free, without staples, tags or strings. It is of note that America played a key role in the invention of tea bags, which happened by chance. The story goes, Sir Thomas Sullivan, a seller of tea in New York City, decided to reduce the costs of sending tea samples to prospective purchasers by eliminating the tin shipping container for them and replacing it with tea samples in hand-sewn silk muslin bags. When customers received them, they were confused and after giving it some thought, threw the bags into a pot of hot water. Sir Sullivan was shocked when customers began asking for tea in silk muslin bags. He realized he had mistakenly created the first tea bag. Around 1904, Sir Thomas began marketing the tea bags in the United States and around the world.

For those who drink tea, there are many ways one may reuse the tea bags instead of disposing of them. Following are some examples of the reuse of tea bags:

☞ You can reuse a tea bag by breaking it and feeding outdoor plant(s) by sprinkling the tea around their soil. This action enriches the soil by increasing nitrogen levels and also gives earthworms (fertilizer) something delicious to eat. Also, the tea bags are great organic fertilizer for potted house plants;

☞ You can, as an alternative to using baking soda as a deodorizer, place a used tea bag in a porous container like a cotton bag, and let the tea absorb the odors of the refrigerator.

☞ Also, by emptying the used tea bags in your vacuum cleaner, the next time you vacuum your carpet will smell nice;

☞ You can effectively remove grease and grime on mirrors, floors, and even linoleum, by using old tea bags.

☞ Make a cold brew with used teabags and then use it as a cleaning solution, for example, on counter tops;

☞ You can add used teabags to the compost pile. Some teabags compost faster than others, depending on the bag material.

☞ Also, you can bury the bag in the ground for the enhancement of soil.

In our day-to-day life, there are many ways to be environmentally friendly, and these tips about the reuse of tea bags is one of them. May we continue to reuse, reduce, recycle and conserve the goods of our sister, Mother Earth.