



THE "GREEN" FRANCISCAN SISTER

In our day-to-day life there are many ways to be environmentally friendly. In this tip, I will share information regarding greeting cards, which have quite a history. It is usually reported that the sending of greeting cards dates back to the ancient Chinese who sent them to family and friends to celebrate the New Year. Also, the early Egyptians used papyrus scrolls to send their greetings.

In the U.S. in 1856, Louis Prang, a German born immigrant, a biographer, who had a business near Boston, is generally credited with the creation of the first greeting card industry. Since that time, greeting cards have become a profitable business as billions of cards are sent each year, according to the Greeting Card Association. In your purchases of greeting cards, seek to purchase environmentally friendly ones as they save water and energy, reduce waste, protect natural resources, and reduce pollution. One may select 100% recycled

content (the higher the post-consumer content the better), and which are printed with vegetable inks. Also, look for the Forest Stewardship Council certification on the back of the paper. Another preferable purchase is tree-free cards as they are made from sustainable resources, up to 100% post-consumer recycled paper, and utilize soy based ink. They, too, are Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified. This tree-free paper saves energy, trees, and has a low carbon footprint. There are many creative reuses for greeting cards. If the card does not have anything written on the back of the front cover, cut the card in half and reuse the front half of the card. Some ideas are the following:

- Write a message on the back of your greeting card and re-gift.
- Cut the front of the card into a rectangular or square shape and punch holes in the corner for string or ribbon and use as a gift tag.
- Save received cards for arts and crafts usage for children throughout the year.
- Use the clear backing of the cards for shopping lists, notes, etc.
- Cut out the picture or message on the received card in a 2" by 5" strip, laminate it if needed, and use as a bookmark.
- Reuse the front of your greeting card by cutting it to fit into a tag on your luggage. Then write your personal information on it.

Some people are sending their cards via email, which is an eco-friendly action. When one chooses to purchase a greeting card(s), always seek to make the "green choice" and reuse them when possible, for in so doing one is environmentally friendly and demonstrates, like St. Francis, a respect for our sister Mother Earth.

