

Blessings for the Signs of Christmas

*Bless our preparations for the Christmas season.
May we reflect on why we celebrate, on the joy we seek,
On the fullness of life and peace we all long for,
And the Birth we wait for.*

*May the images of that tiny babe remind us of the center of things,
Where each human being is an honored child of God,
With God-given dignity.*

*May we find time to pray and to be generous
To those in need in our communities
So that we may honor our broader ties to our larger family.
Bless the signs of celebration around our homes.*

*Bless our longing for peace, nonviolence, and compassion.
Bless the entire human family as we honor the fragile child
Who calls us all His own. Amen.*

— Jane Deren, Ph.D.



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**Center of
Concern**

Center of Concern researches, educates, and advocates
from Catholic social tradition to create a world
where economic, political, and cultural systems
promote sustainable flourishing of the global community.
Founded 1971.
www.coc.org

Alternative Giving for Christmas



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'Tis the Season to Foster a Culture of Peace



"The first condition in fostering a culture of peace is the defense and promotion of the full vision of the human person and human dignity."

—Archbishop Bernardito Auza, Apostolic Nuncio and Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations

This Christmas, foster a culture of peace by supporting the mission of these social justice organizations and fair trade shops:

Brave New Films

Brave New Films (BNF) has a mission to champion social justice issues by using a model of media, education, and grassroots volunteer involvement that inspires, empowers, motivates, and teaches civic participation and makes a difference. Website: www.bravenewfilms.org.

Cards by Anne

These beautiful greeting cards are a simple, yet beautiful way to offer words of encouragement, gratitude, sympathy, joy, blessing, friendship, and love. Website: www.cardsbyanne.com.

Catholic Mobilizing Network

Ministry Against the Death Penalty was founded by Sister Helen Prejean, C.S.J., a leading voice against the death penalty in the United States. MADP embraces values of compassion, mercy, and justice, particularly for the poor and all considered outcasts in our society, and takes a formal position against the death penalty. Website: www.catholicmobilizing.org.

Center of Concern & Education for Justice

Consider a unique gift that will delight the recipient each month: an annual membership to *Education for Justice (EFJ)*. EFJ, a project of Center of Concern, is an award-winning, global, subscription-based monthly publication that provides resources to those who wish to study, teach, and put their faith into action. Also consider giving the gift of a *2018 Signs of the Times Social Justice Calendar™*. Websites: www.coc.org & www.educationforjustice.org.

Maggie's Organics

Maggie's Organics was founded in 1992 based upon the premise that clothing and accessories should be comfortable, durable and affordable, and should be produced in such a way that respects and protects our planet's resources and the lives of those who make the products. Their #ShareTheJourney socks are a perfect stocking stuffer! Website: maggiesorganics.com.

Ten Thousand Villages

Ten Thousand Villages is more than a store. It's a place where you can explore and connect with your global village. Every inspired design is crafted with love using local materials (usually natural or recycled) and time-honored skills by makers from around the world. Every purchase improves the lives of makers by supporting their craft and providing a fair, stable income. Website: www.tenthousandvillages.com.

Torture Abolition and Survivor Support Coalition

Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International (TASSC) provides support to torture survivors and their families. As we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, support TASSC by providing medical, psychological, housing, and legal support for torture survivors. Website: www.tassc.org.

Water With Blessings

Water With Blessings equips and empowers women from around the world to become Water Women who provide clean water to their neighbors. A \$60 sponsorship per woman provides training material, a top-quality home filter system, and additional materials. Website: www.waterwithblessings.org.