

Why St. Anne's Parish Supports Fair Trade

There are people behind all the things that we consume, and purchasing Fair Trade goods reminds us that all people of the world are connected. Fair Trade provides hope for small-scale farmers and artisans who have been trapped in poverty by international market forces over which they have no control. Organizations that are Fair Trade guarantee prices that enable producers to cover their costs of production and provide a decent standard of living for their families. Allowing us to make consumer choices that are consistent with the values of our faith, Fair Trade offers us choices that respect human dignity, promote economic justice and build a true sense of global solidarity.



Women of the CECOCAFEN Coffee Cooperative in Northern Nicaragua sort coffee beans in a healthy environment operated under the principles of fair trade.

As Catholics, we are called to demonstrate a special concern for the most vulnerable members of our human family through concrete actions on behalf of the poor. As a social justice parish, our community makes an "option for the poor" through generous donations of time and money to organizations working to alleviate poverty and promote social, environmental and economic justice. By introducing Fair Trade coffee at hospitality, selling Fair Trade goods, promoting fair trade in the wider community, and learning more about Fair Trade, St. Anne hopes to build on our already existing commitment to social justice. We want to change our buying habits to support the organizations and people behind everything we consume. Ultimately, St. Anne hopes to stand in solidarity with our one human family who needs us to think about them when we make purchases.

The purpose of the ministry is not to sell huge quantities of goods or to become a store. Instead, the ministry wants parishioners to learn about fair trade and incorporate fair trade purchases into all aspects of their lives. The ministry hopes to provide parishioners with the tools to make wise fair trade purchases at local stores, on the internet, or when visiting places where there are fair trade stores, such as Milwaukee, Lake Geneva or Chicago. The ministry hopes that parishioners will become knowledgeable about fair trade, begin buying conscientiously, sharing their knowledge with others, and always think of the person on the other end of each good they buy.



St. Anne's Fair Trade Ministry began after parishioners traveled to our sister parish in the Dominican Republic and met with leaders of the FEDECARES Coffee Cooperative in the same area. Following that trip, St. Anne's former Notre Dame Echo apprentice, pictured weeding fair trade coffee seedlings in Nicaragua on a Global Exchange Reality tour: <http://www.globalexchange.org/tours/>, helped to co-found the ministry by offering her knowledge and experience from researching fair trade as a social work student at the University of Portland and living with a family in Nicaragua who is a farming member of the CECOCAFEN cooperative.