

ISSUES AND ACTIONS



October 2004



SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE (Earth Charter Principle III)

#10 Ensure that economic activities and institutions at all levels promote human development in an equitable and sustainable manner.

What's in a label, and how does it enable us to live out this Earth Charter principle?
Regarding Coffee: Did you know the following;

- *Number of hand-picked beans in a pound of coffee - 4,000
- *Percent of world's coffee grown by small-scale farmers - 70%
- *Price earned by non-fair trade farmers on a \$3 latte - less than 2¢
- *Price earned by fair trade farmers on a \$3 latte - 6-10¢



We cannot deny that there is a volume of information that claims to be fair trade so one needs to be informed and discerning. What should we be looking for?

Here are some guidelines we hope will be helpful to you -

First, there is Fair Trade Certified, a logo provided by Transfair U.S.A. Workers in the fair trade movement. They agree that any product with this logo is genuine fair trade, that the producer received a just price - \$1.26 per pound for conventional coffee beans, and \$1.41 for organic. Beyond that, the Fair Trade Certified label tells consumers that the farmer belonged to a democratically run cooperative and was able to receive advance credit and other kinds of support from a fair trade agency. Transfair itself checks on the co-ops and tracks their products from farm to manufacturer.



The EQUAL Exchange logo guarantees that any product with that brand is fairly traded. EQUAL Exchange works with farmers in Africa, Latin America and Asia who are members of democratic cooperatives owned by the farmers themselves. Catholic Relief Service launched its fair trade coffee program in 2003, as a response to a growing crisis in the field and is offering their coffee through EQUAL Exchange.



CHALLENGE: Let's make the commitment as a Congregation, and as endorsers of the Earth Charter, to only purchase and serve coffee that has a Fair Trade label.

Let's here your thoughts on this. Send all comments to Sister Elaine.

LCWR REGION XIV SOCIAL JUSTICE EFFORTS:

Members from our Social Concerns Committee attend quarterly meetings with representatives from other religious communities for the purpose of information sharing and working together on various issues.

Our most recent meeting dealt with the issue of "Human Trafficking." For those in attendance there were various levels of understanding and involvement on this issue. All present at the meeting felt that it would serve our communities well if we could provide an information/education day on this topic. As yet a date for this intercommunity event is not set, but in the meantime our Social Concerns Committee felt it would do us well if we could bring this topic to our own Congregation.

What is Trafficking?

All acts involved in the transport, harboring or sale of persons within national or across international borders through coercion, force, kidnapping, deception or frauds for purposes of placing persons in situations of forced labor or services, such as forced prostitution, domestic servitude, debt bondage or other slavery-like practices.

Who Is Trafficked?

Although men are also among the victimized, the overwhelming majority of those trafficked are women and children. There is no single victim stereotype, but a majority of trafficked women are under the age of 25 with many in their mid to late teens. Typical victims are young, poor, unemployed, often desperate and without economic opportunity. Their extreme vulnerability renders them likely to become one of the more than 700,000 persons trafficked each year worldwide into domestic servitude, forced labor or sexual exploitation. Trafficked persons are the 21st century's slaves.

(Information from Sisters of the Holy Names)

QUESTION: HOW DOES THIS ISSUE RELATE TO OUR COMMITMENT IN LIVING OUT THE PRINCIPLES OF THE EARTH CHARTER?



**DEMOCRACY IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT.
YOUR VOTE COUNTS!!!**

SEE YOU AT THE POLLS ON NOVEMBER 2, 2004.