

A Look at Fair Trade

“66. Global interconnectedness has led to the emergence of a new political power, that of consumers and their associations. This is a phenomenon that needs to be further explored, as it contains positive elements to be encouraged as well as excesses to be avoided. It is good for people to realize that purchasing is always a moral – and not simply economic – act. Hence the consumer has a specific social responsibility, which goes hand-in-hand with the social responsibility of the enterprise. Consumers should be continually educated (145) regarding their daily role, which can be exercised with respect for moral principles without diminishing the intrinsic economic rationality of the act of purchasing.”

Caritas in Veritate, Pope Benedict XVI

Why?

The Fair Trade Program gives consumers an opportunity to purchase goods from producers who were paid a fair price for their work. It also offers equitable partnerships between marketers in North America and producers in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Fair Trade Criteria include:

- Paying a fair wage in the local context
- Offering employees opportunities for advancement
- Providing equal employment opportunities for all people
- Engaging in environmentally sustainable practices
- Being open to public accountability
- Building healthy and safe working conditions within the local context
- Providing financial and technical assistance to producers whenever possible
- Ensuring that there is no abuse or child labor



Love your neighbor as yourself.
Matthew 22:39



Fair Trade Benefits:

- Generates fair income for thousands of artisans around the world
- Educates consumers about trade and cultures
- Promotes people-to-people ties among artisans, traders and consumers
- Promotes gender equity: 70% of craft artisans are women
- Provides resources for education, health care and community development
- Promotes environmental stewardship
- Provides income between harvest cycles, when rural communities most need it
- Promotes democratic participation in cooperative group structures
- Ensures that artistic technologies in indigenous cultures are passed on to the next generations and preserves traditional cultures

What you can do:

Make a commitment to Fair Trade. Challenge yourself to shift a percentage of the money you spend on food and goods to purchasing Fair Trade products. This will make a big difference in the lives of artisans and farmers around the world.

Increasing numbers of items are being sold in a Fair Trade manner including:

- Coffee, tea and chocolate
- Clothing
- Wide variety of handicrafts
- Hand-knotted rugs – look for the RUGMARK label

For information on purchasing Fair Trade items:

- Trans Fair USA: www.transfairusa.org
- Fair Trade Resource Network: www.fairtraderesource.org
- www.equalexchange.com – good site for obtaining Fair Trade coffee, tea, chocolate and other snacks
- www.fairtradefederation.com
- www.coopamerica.org/programs/fairtrade/products/index.cfm
- www.globalexchangestore.org

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391 Michigan Avenue, NE • Washington, DC 20017

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