



Catholics Confront Global Poverty



Solving the brewing questions of global poverty

A mug of fair trade dark roast isn't just another cup of coffee; just as a fair trade chocolate bar isn't just another piece of candy. When you buy fair trade products you know where they come from, and you can be sure that the people who produced them are paid a fair price for them, have access to benefits such as education for their children and professional development for fellow workers.

But it doesn't end there. Once you know how your economic choices can support production that is fair and sustainable, bigger questions often follow -- questions that can take you from advocating for changes in the coffee served at your parish to advocating for changes in U.S. international trade policy.

That's where Catholics Confront Global Poverty comes in. This effort by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) focuses on seven key global poverty issues that U.S. citizens are in a unique position to impact. When you make a pot of fair trade coffee, consider some of the policy questions that are brewing with it.

About Catholics Confront Global Poverty

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services are calling on one million Catholics in the United States to confront global poverty by advocating for U.S. policies that reduce hunger, disease, conflict, and other factors that contribute to poverty in the lives of our brothers and sisters worldwide. The seven key issues are:

- ◊ Improving and increasing U.S. international assistance.
- ◊ Strengthening international peacekeeping and peacebuilding initiatives.
- ◊ Completing debt relief, so poor nations can invest in the needs of their people.
- ◊ Reforming global trade and agricultural policies to protect small and medium sized farmers.
- ◊ Ensuring that poorer countries' wealth of natural resources are explored in ways that protect the environment and benefit the poor.
- ◊ Promoting comprehensive immigration reform and addressing the root causes of migration.
- ◊ Addressing global climate change and helping vulnerable people adapt to its effects.

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Fair trade projects benefit producers who might not otherwise be able to compete with larger producers. What can be done to make the entire trade system fairer?

According to the teaching of the Catholic Church and the Catholic bishops of the United States, trade policy should be shaped so that it promotes “integral human development.” This means that every person should see his or her life develop in all its aspects, including in education, health, and spirituality. Echoing the values in fair trade programs, trade policy should help, not harm small and medium sized farmers, provide fair labor standards, be transparent and democratic, and protect the environment.

How can environmental policy help the producers of fair trade products?

For Latin American coffee growers, climate change is likely to have a huge impact on where and how they grow their crops. Climate change models show that the ideal altitudes for growing coffee will shift in coming years as temperatures rise and rainfall patterns change. The Coffee Under Pressure (CUP) project, a partnership between CRS and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), will forecast the effects of climate change on coffee-growing communities in Mexico and Central America and help farmers develop strategies to adapt. The program is funded by a grant from Green Mountain Coffee Roasters.

This effort models several values that the Catholic bishops of the United States have championed in the climate change debate, including providing resources to assist poor countries in adapting to the effects of climate change, ensuring that the effects of climate change are mitigated for poor and vulnerable people, and promoting the participation of affected local communities in finding solutions to these issues.

Where do fair trade farmers in developing countries get the assistance they need to be able to transition to fair trade and be competitive?

Fair trade farmers need help with start-up funding, technical assistance, and partner training. USCCB and CRS believe that U.S. international assistance programs that uphold the life and dignity of people are key to helping people rise from poverty in developing countries. The U.S. international assistance system is in need of reform, however. To that end USCCB and CRS urge the U.S. to make integral human development the fundamental

How can I help address these big questions and work for lasting solutions?

Join *Catholics Confront Global Poverty* to receive regular updates and resources on how you can advocate for effective U.S. policies that make a real difference in the lives of the poor globally.

Visit www.usccb.org/globalpoverty or www.crs.org/globalpoverty to become one in a million Catholics confronting global poverty today.

goal of U.S. international assistance and to create a development strategy that focuses on poverty reduction and human development.

What options do small farmers have when they are pushed out of the market by larger, highly-subsidized competition?

Poor farmers are often not able to compete with much more efficient, highly subsidized farmers in developed countries. The current trade policy of many developed countries, including the U.S., means that farmers and workers in developing countries are forced to migrate to areas where the job prospects are better. Currently, according to some estimates, close to 200 million people live outside their country of birth worldwide. Although this number includes refugees, asylum seekers and others, economic migrants make up the largest proportion. Many of these migrants are often displaced due to unfair, highly subsidized, trade policies.

The Catholic Church works to reduce the need for people to migrate and protect those people who have little choice but to do so. The long-term goal is equitable development for all peoples, so that migration is a choice rather than a necessity. Based on the experience of Catholic organizations in many countries, the flow of migrants will continue as long as economic and social factors compel people to leave their homes in search of work or safety. We must both address the factors that create global poverty and marginalization and work for comprehensive migration reform. This includes addressing the factors driving migration, such as trade subsidies, conflict, and climate change, and reforming current U.S. immigration policy that is outdated and ill-equipped to serve the needs of both immigrants and our nation.

How can my community address these questions and work for lasting solutions?

Whether you're part of a parish, school, campus ministry, religious community, or youth group, you can make a difference and become a [Star on the Catholics Confront Global Solidarity Map!](#) It's simple. Just complete these four steps:

PRAY for an end to global poverty with our sample intercessions:
www.usccb.org/sdwp/globalpoverty/cctp_generalintercessions.shtml

LEARN about global poverty. Read "*The Faces of Global Poverty*" (www.usccb.org/sdwp/globalpoverty/pdfs/Backgrounder_The_Face_of_Global_Poverty.pdf) and lead your group in a discussion afterwards.

ACT by contacting your elected officials and urging them to make confronting the major causes of global poverty a priority. For our action alerts, visit <http://actioncenter.crs.org>.

GIVE your time and talent to confront global poverty. Visit the CRS Fair Trade website (www.crsfairtrade.org/get-involved-tips/) for tips on what more you can do.

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