

At it's core, the environmental crisis is a moral challenge. It calls us to examine how we use and share the goods of the earth, what we pass on to future generations, and how we live in harmony with God's creation.

The effects of environmental degradation surround us: the smog in our cities; chemicals in our water and on our food; eroded topsoil blowing in the wind; the loss of valuable wetlands; radioactive and toxic waste lacking adequate disposal sites; threats to the health of industrial and farm workers, The problems, however, reach far beyond our own neighborhoods and work places. Our problems are the world's problems and burdens for generations to come. Poisoned water crosses borders freely. Acid rain pours on countries that do not create it. Greenhouse gases and chlorofluorocarbons affect the earth's atmosphere for many decades, regardless of where they are produced or used.

Environmental issues are also linked to other basic problems. As eminent scientist Dr. Thomas F. Malone reported, humanity faces problems in five interrelated fields: environment, energy, economics, equity, and ethics. To ensure the survival of a healthy planet, then, we must not only establish a sustainable economy but must also labor for justice both within and among nations. We must seek a society where economic life and environmental commitment work together to protect and to enhance life on this planet.

We work to strengthen the combined efforts of lay and religious members of the Marianist family (SM, FMI, MLNNA) in North America in educating and acting for social justice by:

- ◆ **Coordinating, supporting and enhancing current and new social justice interests and involvement**
- ◆ **Being a continental voice of the Marianist Family on social justice issues**

*Mission statement of the
Marianist Social Justice Collaborative*

We are called as individuals, as members of our communities and families and as members of the institutions where we minister to live and act in ways that help sustain the long-term health and stability of environmental, social and economic systems. Living this way helps share earth's resources with persons all over the world now and into an indefinite future.

Ecology & Environment Team Mission Statement

www.msjc.net

**For more information, contact
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**Marianist Social
Justice Collaborative
Ecology & Environment
Issue Team**

**Resources &
ideas for
Parishes**

Java for Justice

Coffee socials after worship is a ubiquitous part of Catholic parish life. However, 70% of the coffee we drink is grown by small farmers in some of the world's poorest nations.

Because of their isolation and reliance on middlemen, and because of the volatility of the coffee market, farmers must often sell their beans for less than the price of production. 2001 was a particularly harsh year which saw global coffee prices of just 44¢ per pound, with farmers receiving about 25¢ per pound.



When your parish is purchasing coffee, look for the Fair Trade label by TransFair. This label guarantees the farmer was paid \$1.26 per pound, or 5¢ above market value, whichever is more.

Eighty percent of Fair Trade coffee is shade grown, which maintains forested ecosystems and protects biodiversity and habitat. Fair Trade coffee must also be produced using Integrated Pest Management strategies, which emphasize alternatives to chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Eighty-one percent of Fair Trade coffee sold in the US is also certified organic, meaning production adheres to more stringent environmental guidelines.

Equal Exchange, one brand of certified fair trade coffee, has partnered with faith communities on the Interfaith Coffee Project. Visit www.equalexchange.com/interfaith for order forms and educational resources for your parish.

Purchasing

All across the globe, the consumer class is burgeoning. The United States holds less than a fifth of the world's people, but consumes more than 30% of its resources.

What purchases does your parish make? Paper for the office? Styrofoam cups and plates for socials? Light bulbs? Lawn care products? In our society, voting with our dollars is just as important as visiting the polling place each November. Consumer power has broadened our choices to include more sustainable options for items from organic food to less hazardous cleaning products to low emission vehicles.

The WorldWatch Institute recently published, *Good Stuff*, an online guide to 25 consumer items, and the environmental and social costs of their use. Download the .pdf at www.worldwatch.org/pubs/goodstuff.

Co-op America has, for the past 20 years, worked to harness the economic strength of consumers, investors, businesses and the marketplace to create a socially just and environmentally sustainable society. Their family of websites, accessible from www.coopamerica.org, connects to you alternative consumer choices and information. You can search the National Green Pages[®], find Responsible Shopper[®] information, learn strategies for socially responsible investing, and more.

Advocacy & Education

If your parish has a social concerns or social action committee, there are many ways to advocate for a more environmentally just and sustainable world.

The US Conference of Catholic Bishop's Environmental Justice Program offers articles, pastoral letters, issue updates and parish education packets and videos at www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp.

The USCCB also participates in the National Religious Partnership for the Environment. Visit www.nrpe.org

Two other member bodies of the NRPE, the National Council of Churches and the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, sponsor the Interfaith Climate and Energy Campaign (ICEC) to pursue justice for the poor around the world and protect all life on earth by taking action on climate change. Visit www.protectingcreation.org for study guides, videos, action alerts, prayer resources and more.

The Marianist Environmental Education Center coordinates the Ohio Climate and Energy Campaign, a local affiliate of ICEC. We are working to increase the energy efficiency of the Ohio vehicle fleet and close regulatory loopholes that exempt old power plants from installing current emission controls. For more information, contact MEEC at 937/429.3582 or meecc@udayton.edu.