

October 21, 2010

Dear Publix leadership,

As clergy in Naples, where Publix will be opening its GreenWise-themed store this week, we write to heartily echo the sentiment proclaimed on every bag of new Publix-brand coffee: "Fair Trade is Only Fair."

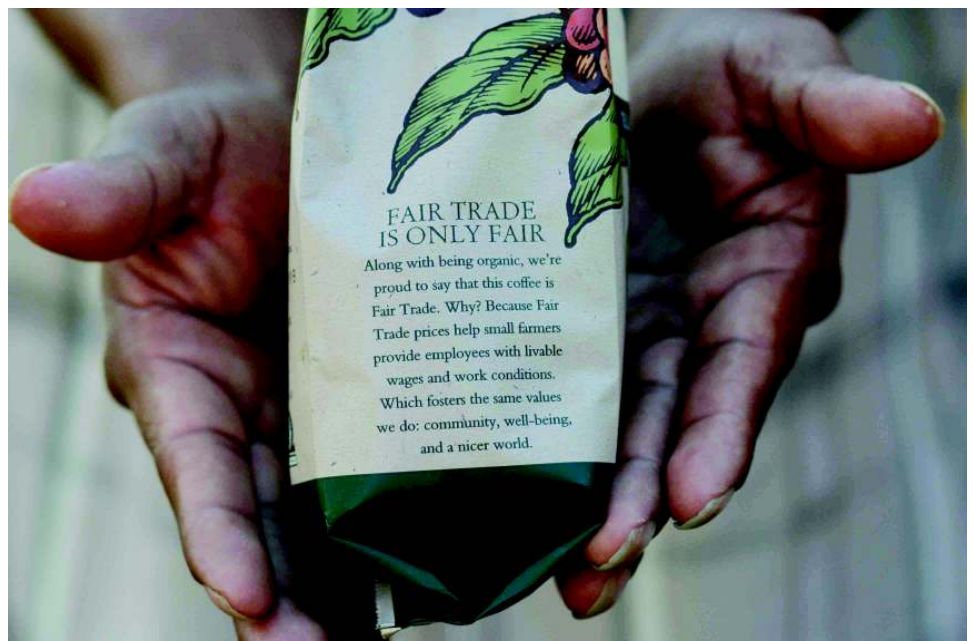
The message continues: "We're proud to say that this coffee is Fair Trade. Why? Because Fair Trade prices help small farmers provide employees with livable wages and work conditions. Which fosters the same values we do: community, well-being and a nicer world."

We, the undersigned, also strongly believe in these values; "livable wages and work conditions" are indeed indispensable ingredients for a nicer world. We celebrate the accomplishments of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) toward that same mission within Florida's tomato industry, where poverty wages have stayed stagnant for decades and federal slavery convictions have emerged repeatedly in recent years.

By partnering with large food industry retailers, the CIW's own Fair Trade efforts -- called the Campaign for Fair Food -- benefit thousands of our state's hardest working, worst paid, least protected laborers: tomato pickers.

A voluntary penny-a-pound paid by the world's four largest fast-food companies and three largest food-service companies provides vital economic relief to workers. Along with supplier codes of conduct designed together with the CIW, the Campaign for Fair Food establishes a historic opportunity for Florida growers to "provide employees with livable wages and work conditions."

The pervasive poverty and powerlessness faced by Florida farmworkers engender a climate where more extreme abuses like forced labor can take root. The CIW knows these dynamics all too well. For helping to liberate more than 1,000 workers in six separate farm servitude



operations since 1997 as well as its groundbreaking work "to eliminate forced labor in supply chains", the CIW was selected by the U.S. Department of State in July for its 2010 "Hero Acting to End Modern-Day Slavery Award".

Since spring's harvest season, two additional federal indictments for forced labor on Florida farms have been unsealed. To learn more about modern-day slavery in our state's agricultural industry, we invite Publix leadership and consumers alike to an interfaith weekend of events titled *Harvesting Hope: Cultivating Justice in the Fields and Beyond*, hosted by Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church.

The keynote panel will be moderated by FGCU President Dr. Wilson Bradshaw and composed of several of southwest Florida's foremost experts on modern-day slavery in the fields – Collier County Sheriff's Office detective Charlie Frost, Chief Assistant US Attorney Doug Molloy, and CIW co-founder Lucas Benitez. It is Saturday, Nov. 13, at 2 PM and is free to the public.

We joyfully welcome Publix's enthusiasm for Fair Trade coffee and hope that Publix also will make a powerful contribution toward ending the human rights crisis in Florida's fields. A rising consensus of retail food leaders – from Whole Foods to McDonald's to Aramark – is joining the CIW to actively transform Florida agriculture for the better. By working with the excellently qualified CIW to enforce a supplier code of conduct and contribute just a penny more per pound to lift up tomato pickers' miserably low wages, Publix can foster right here at home the nicer world made attainable through "livable wages and work conditions."

Sincerely,

The Rev. Bruce Frogge, First Christian Church of Naples

The Rev. Dr. Thomas P. Harp, Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church

The Rev. Dana Hendershot, Christus Victor Lutheran Church

The Rev. Kathleen D. Korb, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Greater Naples

The Rev. Catherine M. O'Connell, Naples United Church of Christ

The Rev. George Ratzmann, St. William Catholic Church

The Rev. Kathryn M. Schillreff, St. Monica's Episcopal Church

The Rev. Roy M. Terry IV, Cornerstone United Methodist Church