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Welcome to the **Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Fair Trade ministry**, part of your parish Global Solidarity Ambassador Program. Thank you for saying, “Yes,” to spreading the Gospel message to “Love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. And to love your Neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37-39)

Pope Francis has said, “In the poor and outcast we see Christ’s face; by loving and helping the poor, we love and serve Christ.” (*Lenten Message of Our Holy Father Francis, 2014*) “The principle of participation leads us to the conviction that the most appropriate and fundamental solutions to poverty will be those that enable people to take control of their own lives.” (*Economic Justice for All*, No. 188, USCCB)

As believers and seekers, we look for ways to bring the values of the Gospel into our daily lives. The Fair Trade model creates opportunities for us to live in solidarity with artisans and farmers around the world and to apply the values of our faith to the choices we make every day as consumers. In your role as the Global Solidarity Ambassador for the CRS Fair Trade ministry in your parish, you have the opportunity to love and serve our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, by bringing His love to others in your parish, your community and around the world.

At its core, Fair Trade is about relationships. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI reminds us “that purchasing is always a moral – and not simply economic – act” (*Caritas in Veritate*, No. 66). The CRS Fair Trade Program works to bring consumers in the United States into right relationships with producers in other countries. We do this through a network of partnerships with Fair Trade organizations committed to using market forces for social and economic change. When you participate in the CRS Fair Trade Program, you are not just buying products – you are entering a network of human relationships that respect human dignity, promote economic justice, and cultivate a true spirit of solidarity.

In the pages of this CRS Fair Trade manual, you will learn what Fair Trade is all about and find the tools that you need to launch and implement a successful Fair Trade ministry in your parish, living out your faith in the marketplace and bringing Fair Trade to your community. Updates and other resources and materials will be provided to you by Catholic Relief Services for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis to help you effectively and confidently carry out your ambassador role. You will also receive ongoing, pertinent information regarding global situations where the Catholic Church has a moral obligation to respond, so that you understand how the Church in America through CRS is taking positive action to assist and provide for those in need around the world.

In Solidarity,

Catholic Relief Services

Archdiocese of Indianapolis