

# Just News

News that brings you the Social Justice teachings of Jesus Christ

## Did you know...? Info on St. Mary's Rest Home

Rene Ronquillo

Did you know that St. Mary's Rest Home, right here in Immaculate Conception Parish, is the only Catholic rest home in Albuquerque?

St. Mary's is an assisted-living facility that has been a ministry of our parish for over 35 years. The facility has been home to many hundreds of elderly people who have low incomes or who cannot pay. In the past, the rate for each resident has been based on his or her ability to pay, so operating costs have largely depended on donations and grants.

Currently, St. Mary's is home to 24 elderly residents and is in jeopardy of closing due to low census numbers and decreased funding over the past 3 years. In addition, the building (located at 205 7th St NW, just west of the church) is in need of upgrading and repairs.

St. Mary's needs your help and the help of the entire Catholic community if we are going to continue this ministry. To learn more about how you can fund a project, make a donation, or volunteer your time or your business' services, please call Gloria Payton, director administrator, at (505) 319-2963.

## Socially Conscious Shopping Fair Trade

### Resources:

- [www.greenamerica.org](http://www.greenamerica.org) | learn how the places we shop affect the environment
- [www.betterworldshopper.org](http://www.betterworldshopper.org) | learn how companies you buy from rank in social and environmental consciousness
- [www.madaeinnations.com](http://www.madaeinnations.com) | learn where the products you buy come from
- [www.fairtradefederation.org](http://www.fairtradefederation.org) | find fair trade businesses in almost any category, and learn how you can positively make a difference in the world with what and where you buy

### Gifts and Clothing

- Peacecraft | 3215 Central Ave NE
- FaithWorks | 3301 Menaul Blvd. NE
- Thrift Town | 3900 Menaul Blvd. NE
- Buffalo Exchange | 3005 Central Ave NE

### Food

- La Montanita Co-op farmers market | locations in Nob Hill & on Rio Grande
- Trader Joe's | locations in off of Paseo Del Norte and Uptown
- Michael Thomas Coffee | 1111 Carlisle Blvd SE

### Home / Building Materials

- ReStore | 204 San Mateo SE
- Southwest Creations Collaborative | 1308 4th St NW

### Shop online

- [www.serrv.org](http://www.serrv.org)
- [www.beadsofhopeafrica.com](http://www.beadsofhopeafrica.com)
- [www.tenthousandvillages.com](http://www.tenthousandvillages.com)

## Consistent Ethic of Life the Death Penalty

Patrick Trujillo

The "consistent ethic of life" is a term coined by Joseph Cardinal Bernardin in 1983 to describe the common thread that runs through Catholic teaching, which is that all human life is sacred and should be protected from conception to natural death. The doctrine opposes legal abortion, capital punishment, assisted suicide, economic injustice, and euthanasia ([www.consistent-life.org](http://www.consistent-life.org)). This view was emphasized by Pope John Paul II in his 1995 encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae* (Gospel of Life), and it is the first major concept (Life and Dignity of the Human Person) of Catholic social teaching.

Despite the Church's espousal of the consistent ethic of life, many Catholics are unaware of the doctrine or are unwilling to accept it as part of their faith. Perhaps nowhere is this dilemma more prominent than when dealing with the death penalty issue. The Catholic bishops in the United States have been calling for an end to the death penalty for more than twenty-five years. Beginning in 2005, they invited Catholics to join them in the ongoing Catholic Campaign to End the Use of the Death Penalty ([www.usccb.org/deathpenalty/](http://www.usccb.org/deathpenalty/)). The church's work on this issue continues all over the country, even in the most pro-death-penalty states in the union.

On June 18, 2010, the state of Utah executed Ronnie Lee Garner by firing squad. Garner was convicted of killing two men in 1985. Salt Lake City's

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# Keeping Alive The Spirit Of Christmas

Fr. Rafael Garcia, S.J.

There's a popular saying: Jesus is the reason for the season. But can we truly say that this is so for U.S. families, even Catholic ones? It appears that materialism and secularism have been creeping into Christmas more and more.

The danger of institutionalized materialism has historically come from one of two systems (at least): Communism and unrestricted Capitalism. The Catholic Church teaches that both of these economic systems are immoral.

Communism holds that there is no need for the spiritual realm and for organized religion. Actually, these are enemies of the goals of the Communist state according to its philosophical foundations. "Equality" is not driven by the heart but by force and imposition from a dictatorial system that ends up becoming the privileged class. As history has proven, this system is oppressive and not a solution.

Unrestricted Capitalism seeks to avoid controls that attempt to prevent abuses and protect the Common Good. The recent Wall Street scandal, in which many individuals were deeply harmed and impoverished by corporate greed, is a glaring example of the effects of unrestricted capitalism.

But many people are still blinded to the resulting materialism of unrestricted capitalism. Profit and material things are taking precedence over human persons. Our society and others appear to be in a downward spiral of desire for and acquisition of material goods at the heavy price of creating injustices and dehumanization for those on the "bottom" of society. But isn't materialism also dehumanizing those on the "top"?

And now Christmas approaches. Often now, Christmas is first associated with gifts and buying, vacations and bonuses. In our culture, the word "Christmas" is often not allowed; we can only refer to "the holiday season." Yet the gift-giving that has its origins in Christianity is marketed as a needed frenzy. Distorted gift-giving is welcomed by the materialistic system. With moderation and consciousness, gift-giving is most appropriate for the Christmas and Epiphany seasons. We received Jesus as total gift. This is the foundation. So it seems appropriate to imperfectly imitate God's generosity in giving of Himself by offering gifts to others. But is this connection even made?

In some cultures, Epiphany and the visit of the Magi are the roots of gift-giving. The Magi brought the best they could offer to the Newborn Jesus whom they ended up adoring: Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh. Each gift had meaning. Thus, on Epiphany, Christians offer gifts to each other in remembrance of the visit and adoration by the Magi to the Baby Jesus.

Materialism is on the upswing. As a Catholic Christian immersed in our popular culture and system, consider new ways of celebrating Advent and Christmas: Ways that focus on God, then on family and community, and then on gifts. In de-materializing Advent and Christmas, we need to maintain religious traditions such as Posadas, Luminarias, Caroling, etc., but understanding their meaning.

Some families have opted to offer gifts to the poor and marginalized instead of to themselves—much better if the exchange can be done in person. Connect gift-giving with a time for prayer. If possible, buy the gift from a local artisan, etc. (someone with whom you can interact).

Avoid the trap of trying to keep up with the latest electronic gadgets. Complex electronic gadgets seem to be diminishing our capacity to muse, to be creative, to join a conversation, to be tranquil, to be happy with fewer things, to be present to the present.

**Let's celebrate that Jesus the reason for the Season!**

## Making a Difference: Fair Trade

Dianne Drago

Many of us hope to make a difference in the world but may feel that helping someone in a distant land to build a better life is beyond our capabilities. If this statement describes you, you may be surprised to learn that you can directly affect the lives of others through simple choices you make every day. No hard work, no travel, no time off from your job – just informed choices about the coffee or tea you drink, the chocolate you indulge in, and other purchases you make day in and day out. By choosing Fair Trade-certified products, you can help farmers in Latin America, Africa, and Asia to lift themselves out of poverty and create better lives for their families.

So what is Fair Trade? Consider the following scenario.

A customer stands in line at a coffee bar. As he waits, he considers the various roasts and the many brews. Our customer goes for a latte, a dark roast with steamed milk, and looks to his favorite table. He hands over \$7 for the latte and two biscotti.

Three thousand miles away on a hillside in a Central American country, a farmer is sweating under the sun. He is stripping the branches of his pruned 6-foot coffee plants of their "cherries." In these ripe red casings are the beans that will be extracted and dried and shipped to North America for brewing. The farmer, on his few acres, makes only pennies, while dollars are being spent at the coffee bar. He has no health

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# Walking the Walk

Rene Ronquillo

One of my favorite quotes from Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta reads:

*"The fruit of silence is prayer; The fruit of prayer is faith; The fruit of faith is love; The fruit of love is service; And the fruit of service is peace"*

By living these words and serving others, we can bring Christ's peace into our hearts and do our part in creating his Kingdom of Heaven here on earth. Here are some ideas to get you started on your quest for the kingdom!

## Events, Classes and Awareness

- The 7th Annual **Catholic Charities Festival of Trees** will be held at the Hyatt Tamaya on Saturday November 21st. If you would like to reserve a table, please call as soon as possible (505-724-4693). All proceeds go to serve those in need in our communities.
- Attend a viewing of the video, **The Story of Stuff**, as well as a discussion on Fair Trade and consumerism led by Anne Avellone, on Saturday Dec 4th. The video, a discussion, and a meal will follow the 5pm mass in the parish hall.
- Sunday, Dec. 5th from 8am – 6pm do your **"Just Christmas Shopping"** at the Fair Trade Gift sale being held in St. Mary's School hallway.
- Attend the **Sanctity of Life Unity and Awareness Mass**, January 19th, at noon at the St. Francis Cathedral in Santa Fe. There will be a march and a roundhouse rally immediately following the mass.
- January is Poverty Awareness Month – [www.povertyusa.org](http://www.povertyusa.org)

## Volunteer Opportunities:

- **Catholic Charities** opportunities; To volunteer at Catholic Charities call: Aragon Marquez at (505) 724-4634
  - Tutor a refugee youth after school
  - Join the Senior Transportation program in Albuquerque: drive a senior adult to medical appointments, grocery shopping, and other errands
- Jesus expressed, when you visited the prisoner, you visited me. Join the **Immaculate Conception Prison Ministry** Share your faith and fellowship with our brothers and sisters in jail. Fall orientation is Saturday, November 20th. Please call Steve Hay (505-839-8123) before Nov. 19th to learn more about this ministry.
- **Casa de las Comunidades**, a Catholic Worker house that assists families in need in our community, is searching for volunteers to teach adult catechism and lead youth activities. Call Sister Teresa at (505) 265-2371.

## Advocacy:

Visit the **USCCB website** to learn how you can advocate for important issues affecting our Catholic Christian values, such as stem cell research, immigration, abortion and many other threats to the dignity of human life.

The website offers links to news, petitions, voting and letter writing opportunities.

## Parish & Faith Community Outreach Liaison at Catholic Charities

Rosie C. Shawver

YES YOU CAN make a difference. [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)

In July 2010, Jim Gannon, the CEO and chief executive director at Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, created a position and hired me as the parish and faith community (non-Catholic) outreach liaison.

In my new position, I will be reaching out to Catholic communities and other faith communities in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe to help them strengthen their commitment to social justice. My ultimate goal is to help develop and strengthen relationships among Catholic Charities and faith communities so that both faith communities and Catholic Charities are enriched.

Firstly, I intend to listen to parishes, faith communities, and all involved at Catholic Charities. For the past six weeks, I have been shadowing and listening to staff in each of Catholic Charities' five centers of excellence: Immigration and Citizenship Legal Assistance, Refugee Settlement and Support, Educational Opportunity, Self-Sufficiency & Housing Assistance, and Community Involvement. I have learned how each Catholic Charities center serves the community in New Mexico, and I have witnessed the great joys and challenges that both clients and staff face. Each center, while having different focuses, has a primary mission of serving all people with dignity and respect while working towards our clients' self-sufficiency.

All parishes/faith communities have different needs and desires, and they are also

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## Catholic Charities (continued)



at different stages in their justice outreach efforts. Some parishes struggle with social injustices that permeate the lives of their congregants (i.e., poverty, hunger, loss of jobs). Other parishes, while not immune to social injustices, are more apt, because they have more resources, to learn about justice issues and to serve others. By listening to parishes and faith communities, we at Catholic Charities can more deeply understand the needs of the communities that we serve. No matter where a parish/faith community is at regarding living out the Church's understanding of justice, listening is necessary for mutual growth in the parish/faith community and in Catholic Charities.

Education about Catholic social teaching and societal issues is also necessary. Even if people think that they are an expert in one area of societal issues, there is always more that they can learn. For example, in a parish in which legal immigrants are members, the immigrants might benefit from a course on workers' rights in the United States. Or maybe a more affluent parish could learn from an interactive lecture series on how our actions in the United States affect the livelihood of others around the world. To fulfill these educational needs, I, along with my colleagues at Catholic Charities, will be using various media to teach others about what it means to be an active Christian by beginning with prayer and moving towards action.

If you are interested in learning more about Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, please contact me at [shawver@ccasfnm.org](mailto:shawver@ccasfnm.org). When you learn about the different centers of excellence at Catholic Charities, it will be difficult not to have compassion for the people whom Catholic Charities serves; I pray that the knowledge will break your heart and propel you towards action.

## Fair Trade (continued)

care. He can't afford to send his kids to school. His family lives in a tiny, wood-framed building with a tin roof and a dirt floor.

In these two worlds circling the coffee bean, there's an income gap — some would call it a morally indefensible chasm — between consumer and grower. Coffee goes through many stages after it's grown, and along the route from bean to brew, it gains value exponentially. There's one problem: those who work the hardest, the growers, are paid the least. And many of them are powerless. (Dirk Van Susteren, [www.crsfairtrade.org](http://www.crsfairtrade.org))

The Fair Trade movement developed in response to this glaring disparity in economic power. Fair Trade is a set of business practices voluntarily adopted by the producers and buyers of agricultural commodities and hand-made crafts that are designed to advance many economic, social, and environmental goals ([www.equalexchange.coop](http://www.equalexchange.coop)). The principles of Fair Trade include a guaranteed fair price for farmers, safe working conditions, investment by farmers in community development projects, and environmentally sound farming practices ([www.transfairusa.org](http://www.transfairusa.org)).

Why is Fair Trade important to us as Catholics? In one way or another, the principles of Fair Trade relate to all seven themes

## Death Penalty (continued)

Bishop John Wester prayed for God's love and mercy to heal all those affected by the situation, and he further prayed that "society move beyond the death penalty and thus affirm the dignity and sanctity of all human life." Quoting from the US Bishops' 1999 publication, "A Good Friday Appeal to end the Death Penalty," he said that "we cannot overcome crime by simply executing criminals, nor can we restore the lives of the innocent by ending the lives of those convicted of their murders. The death penalty offers the tragic illusion that we can defend life by taking life." The Garner execution was one of 31 executions carried out in the United States so far this year ([www.death-penaltyinfo.org](http://www.death-penaltyinfo.org)).

Perhaps the best way to consider the death penalty as it relates to the principles of the consistent ethic of life is to distill the issue down to its most basic elements and ask oneself: would Jesus Christ support the death penalty? Or, perhaps more to the point: could Jesus Christ be a member of the firing squad that killed Ronnie Lee Garner?

of Catholic social teaching, including the life and dignity of the human person, the rights of workers, and care for God's creation. Perhaps the most obvious way our participation in Fair Trade relates to our core values is through the concept of solidarity. This principle asserts that we are one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they may be.

Making the switch to Fair Trade coffee and other products is easier than you may think. Many local grocery stores carry Fair Trade-certified products; just look for the Fair Trade-certified label. Online shopping is another convenient way to look for Fair Trade products. Go to the Catholic Relief Services Fair Trade website at [www.crs-fairtrade.org](http://www.crs-fairtrade.org) to shop and learn more about Fair Trade.

No hard work, no travel, no time off from your job...just a choice!

Prayer: Feed our bodies and our souls, oh Lord, with the bread and love of justice. Help us see the links between the food we eat, our sisters and brothers around the world, and your creation. (Education for Justice)

### Social Justice Ministry:

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