

Miracles Do Happen

The story of Juan Ana coffee

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“The New Ulm Diocese is likely the only Catholic Diocese that imports its very own brand of gourmet specialty coffee.”

We as Catholics often struggle with how to bring the lessons of faith and social justice from the table of the Eucharist into our homes, parishes and the workplace. We do this by how we spend our time, talent and treasure. In the treasure category, the easiest and most familiar method is to directly donate to the parish or special needs collections or favorite charity. Another method that is not as common and easily overlooked is the choice we make in something as mundane as the purchase of our daily cup of coffee. By the type of coffee we drink we can support poverty, child labor, and the degradation of the environment on one hand OR we can support the ability to make a living wage, human dignity, and preservation of the global environment through sustainable agriculture.

The story of coffee growing in Central America is not a pretty one. Since the time of the Spanish colonial conquest of Latin America, 98% of the land has been in the hands of 2% of the population. Conquest of the land also meant the conquest of the indigenous peoples. They became the indentured workers on what used to be their land.

Typically, the life style of the coffee pickers and their families is a cycle of poverty and debt for which there is no way out. They live without running water, electricity and medical care. The picker is paid \$2-\$3 a day on a quota system. If the quota is not



met, then he is paid nothing. To ensure that the quota is met, children are recruited to help instead of going to school. Only 13% of coffee workers complete their education.

Coffee plays a huge roll in the US economy. Coffee is the second largest traded commodity on the world market, second only to petroleum. It is the US's largest food import. We consume 1/5 of the entire world's coffee, importing 2.72 billion pounds a year, produced largely by indentured workers.

Enter Fr. Greg Schaffer of the Diocese of New Ulm. In the early 1990's, Father bought a small farm to begin coffee growing and processing. Since Father Greg had used the inheritance from his parents to buy the farm, the people felt it was appropriate to name the coffee 'Juan Ana' after them, John and Ann Schaffer.

Ken and Kathy Huebert of New Ulm have been distributing the Juan Ana coffee since 1993. Orders come from all over the United States. There are parishes that sell it once a month after Mass and Catholic schools that use it for fund raisers. The popularity of whole bean vs. ground waxes and wanes with changing tastes. The new, darker roast has become very popular.

Ken and Kathy Huebert, members of the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New Ulm, have been carrying much of the responsibility for distribution of Juan Ana coffee since 1993.

Father Greg has worked for over forty years with the grace of God to make the miracle of San Lucas Parish happen. Let us all pray for the continued support of our diocese to the people of San Lucas.

May your next cup of coffee be Juan Ana. Salud!

For further information on Juan Ana coffee or San Lucas Toliman Mission volunteer work, contact San Lucas Mission Office, (507) 359-2966, ext. 304; or visit www.dnu.org/service/sanlucas.html

Sources for Juan Ana Coffee



- Online at: www.juananacoffee.com
- San Lucas Mission Office
1400 6th Street North
New Ulm, MN 56073
khuebert@dnu.org
- Hy Vee Foods in New Ulm
- Church of St. Mary, Sleepy Eye
(507) 794-4171
- Martin and Beth Meidl
Lamberton, (507) 752-7415