

ECO PALM SUNDAY

March 16, 2008



A worker sorts and prepares palm fronds for selling.
Courtesy of Lutheran World Relief

Anna lives in the town of Carmelita, Guatemala where she and her community rely on the harvesting, processing, and selling of palms for their livelihood. Much of what Anna's community harvests will eventually be used in churches across the U.S. for Palm Sunday celebrations.

Though US palm sales total more than \$4.5 million every year, harvesting communities like Anna's rarely share in this bounty.

In conventional harvesting, workers are paid based on volume. The more fronds they cut, the more income they generate, encouraging over-harvesting and threatening the rainforest. Middlemen then transport the palms out of communities for processing, where over 50% of the palms are discarded because of poor quality.

Environmental Protection

Eco-Palms are harvested in a more sustainable way—harvesters are paid on the quality of their palms rather than the quantity. These communities are also committed to using harvesting practices that minimize the impact on the natural forest. Eco-palms, however, are harvested in a sustainable manner that ultimately helps to protect the environment. Harvesters are trained to gather only quality palm fronds in a way that allows the plant to keep growing. The palms are then brought to a community processing building, where the palms are processed and packaged for export. By processing the palms themselves, these communities capture more of the profits. When we raise our branches, we play an important role in protecting forests, local jobs, and sustainable livelihoods in harvesting communities.

How to Order Eco-Palms

United Methodists are encouraged to support this social and environmental justice project through the purchase of palms. For more information about placing your order by February 20, email ecopalms@umn.edu or call RaeLynn Jones Loss at 612.624.7418.

How to Give

You can also support sustainable agricultural programs by giving to **Sustainable Agriculture and Development, UMCOR Advance # 982188**. Your contributions will enable UMCOR to respond effectively and quickly. Write the # and name of the project on your offering envelope and in the memo line of your check.

Give Online

www.givetomission.org

By Offering

For local church and Annual Conference credit, put your gift in the offering plate on Sunday.

By Check

Make your check to **UMCOR** and mail to UMCOR, PO Box 9068, New York, NY 10087

By Credit Card

Call toll-free (800) 554-8583



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The United Methodist Committee on Relief delivers hope and enhances human dignity through food, shelter, health and peace projects.

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