

Lifting Our Cup: A Coffee Challenge Litany

by Barbara Lund

Gather together, sisters in Christ, to celebrate the community God creates. Fill small baskets with coffee beans and grounds, light candles, surround with coffee cups and pour a pot of delicious brew.

Read and reflect

This cup holds grief and balm in equal measure, light, darkness.
Who drinks from it must change. (*May Sarton*)

Perhaps Sarton knew the goodness of conversation shared over coffee. Fellowship and coffee renders space for listening and supporting, serving, inviting, healing one another in grief and balm. Through your commitment to purchase fair trade coffee, your fellowship expands and you are connected to traditional coffee growers; their families and communities.

Read together Psalm 116: 12–13

What shall I return to God for all God's bounty to me?
I will lift up the Cup of Salvation and call on the name of God.

One: Women of Faith, Action and Discerners of good taste, lift up your cups in thanksgiving, for your commitment, challenge, and call to create trade relationships for fair trade coffee.

All: We lift our cups, thanks be to God!

Drink slowly, aware of the blessings in the giving of thanks.

One: The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, we give thanks for the earth: water, soil, sun and seed. For the forest canopy that supports the diversity of life sustained alongside the traditional shade grown coffee plantations of fair trade farmers — birds, plants, insects, watershed, and rich soils.

All: We lift our cups for the sanctuary of creation, thanks be to God.

Drink and savor the taste, remembering all good gifts.

One: Coffee growing communities are at the heart of fair trade. We imagine their faces of life and labor from the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro to the islands of Indonesia, from the fincas of Costa Rica to the foothills of Kenya, from the terraced coffee gardens of Arabia to the rugged landscape of Columbia, from the ambient climate of Brazil to the wild coffee forests of Ethiopia, from the small plantations in Vietnam to the vast plantations of Nicaragua, from the small farms in Mexico to the volcanic rich soil of Guatemala, along the Ivory Coast of West Africa to the shaded canopies of El Salvador — fair trade ensures producers of a living wage that puts people and planet before corporate greed.

All: We touch the beans in the baskets; we sift the grounds through our fingers; we see signs of life and hope in the midst of struggle. We lift our cups and commit to paying a fair price that supports the dignity of the coffee farmer's basic human needs for food, shelter, education and healthcare.

Drink deeply knowing justice informed by faith is hard, yet never tasted so good.

One: Women gathered here in this circle linked with circles of sisters around the globe, your uniting for a greater good has made a difference. Lift your cups in celebration for the 90 Ton Challenge you have met.

All: Yes, we did it together, thanks be to God.

Drink well knowing fair trade is good news.

One: We will continue to drink together, remembering we share God's vision of abundant life for all.

All: What shall we return to God for all God's bounty?

Individual voices from the circle call out:

- Farmers' hope is fair trade; we will continue to learn about the realities of trade.
- We value human life and labor; we will actively support trading fairly.
- One cup at a time, we will drink to justice.
- We pour coffee to the brim; we will learn to pour from our life of abundance.
- We will live and work together, seeking economic solidarity for all.

All: Justice never tasted so good!

One: We pray to the Giver of Life and Hope,

All: You call us, O God of Blessing, to bless others with the cup of life and salvation. Your presence is the power we need to evoke change. Your blessing of love enables us to commit ourselves to the unending struggle for justice. How grateful we are for your generous love. How glad we are for one another and the coffee time we share from field to table. In Christ we pray, AMEN!