

20TH ANNUAL ADVENT ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR

December 2-3, 2023

(Honor Cards also available on December 9-10, 2023)

*"JUST AS I HAVE LOVED YOU, YOU ALSO
SHOULD LOVE ONE ANOTHER." (JOHN 13:34)*



**JUSTICE, PEACE, AND
INTEGRITY OF CREATION (JPIC)
IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CATHOLIC CHURCH**



2023 ADVENT ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE #	TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE #
Welcome and 2023 Theme	02	La 72 Migrant and Refugee Center	10
How Can You Participate?	04	LIFE Skills Foundation	11
Bull City Fair Trade	06	Living Laudato Si' Philippines	12
Families Moving Forward	07	Virgen de Guadalupe Scholarship Fund	13
Furniture Project of Durham	08	World Central Kitchen	14
Habitat for Humanity of Durham	09	Donation/Tax Receipt Form	15

AGAPĒ LOVE AND THE SPIRIT OF GIVING DURING ADVENT

"I GIVE YOU A NEW COMMANDMENT, THAT YOU LOVE (AGAPĒ) ONE ANOTHER. JUST AS I HAVE LOVED YOU, YOU ALSO SHOULD LOVE (AGAPĒ) ONE ANOTHER. BY THIS EVERYONE WILL KNOW THAT YOU ARE MY DISCIPLES, IF YOU HAVE LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER." (JOHN 13:34-35)

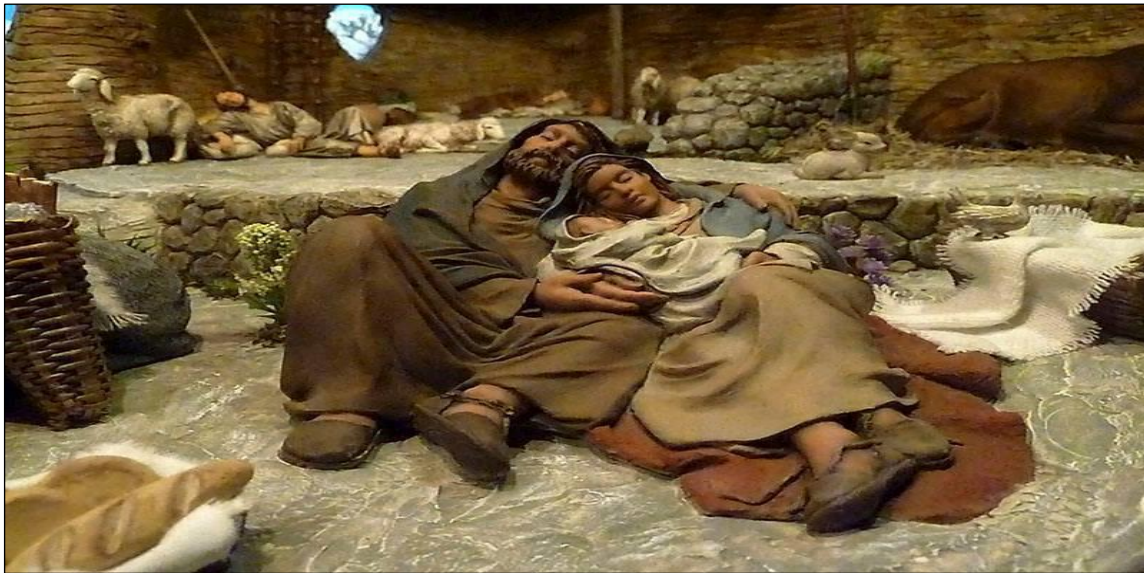
Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love - Immaculate Conception's Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Advent Alternative Gift Fair is a special opportunity for our parish to connect the liturgical celebrations of Advent and Christmas to the Gospel's liberating message. It is a joyful opportunity to live your faith in building up God's Kingdom of love, charity, and justice for all of creation. The Advent Alternative Gift Fair is designed to help you find meaningful holiday gifts to recognize your loved ones without engaging in the hyper-consumerism that conflicts with our spirituality and Catholic beliefs.

Normally we select our Advent Alternative Gift Fair Scriptural theme from the liturgical readings for the weekend. This year, however, we specifically chose Jesus's "new commandment" from the Gospel of John. This passage, often proclaimed liturgically during Holy Week, takes on a very special meaning for us during the Advent season as our parish celebrates the 800-Year Anniversary of Saint Francis's First Nativity in Greccio. The image of the Christ child lying in a manger reminds us of the abounding love of God in the "gift of the incarnation" and the lived reality of this love in human history and in all of creation.

In Greek, over seven unique words can be used for “love.” Although different terms are used throughout the New Testament, it is particularly significant that the Gospel of John specifically uses the Greek word “agapē” for “love” in Jesus’s “new commandment.” While not diminishing other forms of love, agapē love is clearly defined as God’s love for us that must be embodied in our actions in love of one’s neighbor to authentically mark one as a true disciple of Jesus. In preparing for this weekend, I was reminded of four of the ways I often differentiated the Scriptural notion of agapē from other Greek concepts of love in my courses for my undergraduate students that may help us understand how our giving reflects God’s love at our Advent Alternative Gift Fair.

I. GOD LOVED US FIRST!

First, biblical agapē love is not a human construct/concept. Agapē love is **initiated/defined by God** (*i.e. the lover*). **God loved us first!** Throughout Sacred Scripture, God modeled this call to love and serve others. We follow a God that became incarnate, lived among us, teaching, healing, and loving especially those most in need, giving up his life, and rising. We did not earn or deserve this love due to our human goodness. We needed it. God freely gave it. We are only capable of this love when the Holy Spirit empowers Christ to live in us and work His love through us. In humility for what God has done for us, we experience *metanoia* (*i.e. a transformation/reorientation of the mind/conversion of character/life*), in which we long to serve others as God loves us. God’s agapē love is the model for our giving at our Advent Alternative Gift Fair.



II. AGAPĒ LOVE IS AN ACT OF THE WILL/ACTION

Second, agapē love is an **act of the will that necessitates action** for the benefit of the one loved, enabled by the Spirit/God’s grace. It is not motivated by (*or understood as*) an emotion, feeling, sentimentality/affections, impulse, or intuition. Paul echoes this “active” notion of agapē love as the first “Fruit of the Spirit” by using only Greek verbs in the present tense (*i.e. to be kind, to be patient, etc. [1 Cor 13:4-8]*). Love, therefore, must be active as an embodied lifestyle and habitual practice or love is not present at all. Our parish models agapē love in the many ways we give through our JPIC ministries, like our Advent Alternative Gift Fair, with the intentional, conscious purpose to help those in need.

III. AGAPĒ LOVE IS UNCONDITIONAL

Third, agapē love is **unconditional**. Christ calls His disciples to love as He did... a self-sacrificial love where one discovers their true humanness and freedom in choosing to serve the other. God makes no

conditions for God’s love for us and commands that we love others without conditions. Biblical agapē love calls us to seek only the good of others, as God did in sending Christ to redeem us (Jn 3:16). Agapē love serves with humility, not judging based on the value, loveliness, appearance, social status, wealth, relationship (*family, friend, enemy*), or any other “evaluation of the worthiness” of the recipient. We do not withhold agapē love from enemies, those who hurt/injure us, with whom we disagree/dislike, or people who disagree/dislike us. Hence, we “give” the gift of love not because we are “good” or because the “recipient” is “good,” but because God is “good!”

IV. AGAPĒ LOVE IS ONLY SELF-GIVING, NEVER DEMANDS

Finally, agapē love has **no expectation of reciprocity**. It is an a-symmetrical, ethical act of giving of oneself in seeking the welfare of the one loved. In agapē love, one’s interest is in giving, not in what one can gain. The agapē love we are commanded to give does not demand a return of love or any exchange/transaction. It does not seek to promote one’s own demands for justice or rights. The lover in a sense relinquishes control over the beloved. Paradoxically, this is not a negation of dignity, but the discovery of it. By sharing the love of Christ in us that we have experienced in our own lives, Christians set themselves apart from the world (*By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another*”).

On behalf of our Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation ministries, Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, and all the local and global organizations you are generously helping to support here today through generous donations/agapē love, we thank you!

Kennith M. Chiha
Director of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)
Immaculate Conception Catholic Church

HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE?

CONTRIBUTE TO A LOCAL OR GLOBAL CHARITY

Make a direct contribution to one or more of the organizations featured at our Advent Alternative Gift Fair. Consider honoring someone with an “alternative gift,” given in his or her name to an organization or a group that serves those in need with charity, justice, or care for our common home.

- At the Advent Alternative Gift Fair, an honor card will be provided for your gift recipient.
- All contributions are welcome. Thank you for your generosity!

Whether you wish to donate to *one* organization or to *many*, we accept cash, credit cards, or a check written to **Immaculate Conception Catholic Church**. All parishioners will be asked to fill out the “receipt form” at the end of this booklet (*also provided at the gift fair*) to ensure that your donation is properly distributed to the organizations you have chosen to support.

OR

PURCHASE A FAIR-TRADE GIFT

The gifts that are available for purchase through **Bull City Fair Trade** have been made by organizations that assure that the dignity of the worker, artisan, or farmer who produced them is paid a fair wage for their labor. Items include fair trade coffee, chocolate, and handmade art pieces. Yet, fair trade is much more than a fair price!

Fair trade principles include:

- **Fair Price:** Democratically organized farmer groups receive a guaranteed minimum floor price and an additional premium for certified organic products.
- **Fair Labor Conditions:** Workers on fair trade farms enjoy freedom of association, safe working conditions, and living wages. Forced child labor is strictly prohibited.
- **Direct Trade:** With fair trade, importers purchase from fair trade producer groups as directly as possible, eliminating unnecessary middlemen and empowering farmers to develop the business capacity necessary to compete in the global marketplace.
- **Democratic and Transparent Organizations:** Fair trade farmers and farm workers decide democratically how to invest Fair Trade revenues.
- **Community Development:** Fair trade farmers and farm workers invest fair trade premiums in social and business development projects like scholarship programs, quality improvement trainings, and organic certification.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Harmful agrochemicals and GMOs are strictly prohibited in favor of environmentally sustainable farming methods that protect farmers' health and preserve valuable ecosystems for future generations.

*To learn more about fair trade, visit the website of the **Fair-Trade Federation:***

<http://www.fairtradefederation.org>

**Thank You for Supporting our
JPIC Advent Alternative Gift Fair.
Blessed “Shopping!”**

If you have any questions, please contact:

Kennith M. Chiha

**Director of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of
Creation (JPIC)**

Office: (919) 682-3449 Ext. 293

chihak@icdurham.org

Isabel Kovalik

**Assistant to the Director of Justice, Peace,
and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)**

Office: (919) 682-3449 Ext. 274

kovaliki@icdurham.org

Parish Office: 901-A West Chapel Hill Street, Durham, NC 27701



<https://bullcityfairtrade.com>

Bull City Fair Trade, previously known as One World Market, began in 1991 in the basement of Watts Street Baptist Church in Durham, NC. Bull City Fair Trade is part of a worldwide movement that is striving to improve the livelihood of disadvantaged people in developing countries through the expansion of fair trade.

Fair trade is an ethical, environmentally conscious, sustainable business approach rooted in dialogue, respect, and transparency. It is a set of principles that focuses on opportunities for disadvantaged artisans and farmers living in developing countries. Fair trade is not charity, but a long-term system that seeks justice in the international trading system.

This system of exchange seeks to create greater equity and partnership in the international trading system by:

- Creating Opportunities for Economically and Socially Marginalized Producers
- Developing Transparent and Accountable Relationships
- Building Capacity
- Promoting Fair Trade
- Paying Promptly and Fairly
- Supporting Safe and Empowering Working Conditions
- Ensuring the Rights of Children
- Cultivating Environmental Stewardship
- Respecting Cultural Identity

Fair Trade can empower the poorest of the poor by providing a holistic approach to trade and development that aims to alter the ways in which commerce is conducted. Fair Trade Organizations seek to create sustainable and positive change in developing and developed countries.





Families Moving Forward (FMF) is the primary agency in Durham focused on addressing the needs of families with children who are experiencing homelessness. FMF has served almost 350 families since its formation in 2016 with the merger of Durham Interfaith Hospitality Network (DIHN) with Genesis Home. Immaculate Conception Church has been partnering with FMF, and DIHN before that, for 25 years. It is a critical ministry allowing parishioners to provide compassionate service and hospitality, as they witness to the human dignity of all in our community.

FMF is a leader in Durham and throughout North Carolina in addressing the impact of homelessness on children. Its two-generation approach recognizes both individual needs as well as the needs of the family, combining interventions for parents and children to interrupt the cycle of poverty and homelessness.

Your gift will help FMF provide life changing interventions, skills, and opportunities for families in its emergency shelter, rapid rehousing, and aftercare programs.





THE FURNITURE PROJECT *of Durham*

The Furniture Project of Durham, a ministry of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, provides furniture and housewares for families and individuals referred by partner agencies, shelters, and programs that re-house and case manage the homeless, such as Housing for New Hope, Families Moving Forward, and Urban Ministries. Those we assist have no means to purchase a bed(s), kitchen table, couch, lamp, or basic housewares.

Our all-volunteer team picks up donated items for storage and delivers items on a weekly basis. There is no charge for any furniture, housewares, delivery, or bed set up. Items are provided from donations, as available.

For Calendar Year 2022, The Furniture Project of Durham furnished homes for 81 households, serving 156 individuals, 66 of whom were children.

Occasionally, The Furniture Ministry does not have an essential item(s) for a delivery such as a bed, kitchen table, or cookware. Monetary donations enable us to purchase these gently used items, when donated items are unavailable. These donations also help pay for our storage unit costs, which is our largest expense, since we are blessed with so many donated items by grace-filled donors.

Examples of how your donation can benefit The Furniture Project of Durham:

- \$20 - Set of dishes with flatware
- \$45 - Cookware
- \$80 - Couch
- \$200 - Bed
- \$250 - A month of storage for one of the storage units





Seeking to put God’s love into action, **Habitat for Humanity of Durham** has been building and repairing homes in Durham since 1985, providing bright futures and positive outcomes for our low-income neighbors in need of affordable housing.

NEW CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

Durham Habitat has built more than 470 new homes for families who could otherwise not afford to own their own home. Durham Habitat believes that a safe and healthy home promotes a safe and healthy family. As Habitat homebuyers transform their lives through their investment in their homes, they also transform and revitalize the Durham blocks and neighborhoods in which they live.

CRITICAL REPAIRS PROGRAM

The mission of Durham Habitat’s Critical Repairs Program is to help low-income Durham residents age in place with dignity in safe and healthy homes. The elderly and disabled homeowners Durham Habitat serves are unable to afford the necessary repairs to keep their homes – and themselves – safe and healthy. Therefore, Habitat provides these services – 560 to date -- at no cost to the homeowner.

HEIRS PROGRAM

Through this new and innovative program, our current homeowners are invited to attend educational seminars to learn about estate planning and life insurance with trusted Habitat partners. Habitat will then cover the costs of any fees to have their will and estate documents formalized. This helps our homeowners protect the assets they have worked so hard to buy.

A few examples of how your contribution could help Durham Habitat:

- \$25 can provide a box of nails to build a new Habitat Home
- \$50 can provide all the wood screws to build a new Habitat Home.
- \$100 can provide a ceiling fan with light for a new Habitat Home
- \$150 can provide an interior door for a child’s new room
- \$300 can provide blinds for all windows in a new Habitat Home.
- \$500 can provide an HVAC repair for one homeowner to keep them safer and healthier





La 72 Franciscan Migrant and Refugee Shelter

La 72 Franciscan Migrant and Refugee Shelter in Tenosique, Mexico, is located on one of the most conflictive and dangerous areas on the migratory route. Since its founding on April 25, 2011, La 72 has opened its doors and cared for more than 100,000 people, the vast majority of whom are fleeing life-threatening situations in Central America. La 72 remains dedicated to the comprehensive care of migrants and refugees who flee abject poverty, hunger, violence, and the powerful environmental and political forces that wreak havoc on vulnerable people. La 72 offers each person humanitarian assistance in the form of medical attention, psychosocial care, advice, case management, internet access, food, basic hygiene items, rest, shelter, clothing, and other necessary items.

All guests receive human rights education and information, as well as legal assistance in accessing asylum and residency status in Mexico. Its fundamental task is to welcome, comfort, and accompany vulnerable people. La 72 is the first migrant shelter in Mexico to help vulnerable groups, providing special assistance is to women, children, unaccompanied minors, and LGBTQ+ people.

La 72 also works to change immigration policies to guarantee the safe passage of all migrants in Mexico. This includes advocacy at the national level, establishing effective partnerships with the local population, as well as outreach and human rights education for border communities (*the “School of Human Rights”*).

Last January, several members of our Immaculate Conception community traveled to La 72, bringing medication/supplies and volunteering there to learn more about their efforts to support migrants and refugees.

Here are a few examples of how your donation could assist with the mission of La 72:

- \$20 US = 100 diapers.
- \$50 US = supplemental food for 200 meals.
- \$100 US = 1 week of cleaning supplies.
- \$500 US = 25 sleeping pads.
- \$1,000 US = housing for long-term volunteers for 6 months.





www.lifeskillsfound.org

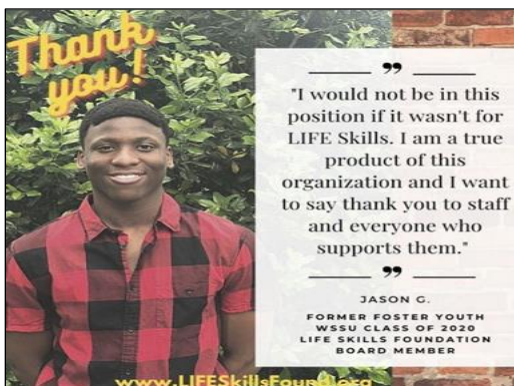
LIFE Skills Foundation is a beacon of hope for young adults leaving foster care. Our mission is to empower emerging adults to lead stable lives by providing housing and comprehensive support services. With your support, we create environments where young people can truly “be.”

Transitioning into adulthood for foster youth often involves homelessness, incomplete education, and limited resources. LIFE Skills steps in, offering tailored services to support youth in this critical phase. At LIFE Skills, we assist in crucial areas like Housing, Employment, Education, Health and Wellness, Financial Literacy, and Communication. Our transitional housing provides stability, enabling them to pursue education, enhance job skills, and acquire independent living skills.

Despite our strides, the heartbreaking reality is that we still turn away those in need. Your donation is a lifeline, directly impacting and making a significant difference in the lives of these deserving young people. They deserve basic comforts—a secure place to sleep, food on the table, and a supportive community. They deserve the opportunity to dream, make mistakes, and be successful. By supporting LIFE Skills, you contribute to a community that values and uplifts every member. Join us in making a positive impact this holiday season. Your donation not only changes lives but transforms communities. They are not just their kids or your kids; they are all our kids—yours, mine, and most importantly, ours. Embrace the spirit of giving and help us build brighter futures. Donate today and be the reason someone finds the stability to “be.”

Consider how your support can make a difference:

- \$5,000 provides housing for one year
- \$1,000 covers 16 counseling sessions
- \$500 sponsors a full course of independent living classes
- \$250 ensures one month of groceries





The Philippines is a country particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due to its vast shoreline and warm ocean waters. With approximately 20 typhoons a year, these tropical cyclones are becoming progressively stronger and more destructive.

Living Laudato Si' Philippines aims to empower citizens to adopt lifestyles and attitudes that will promote sustainable development and stop degradation of the environment.

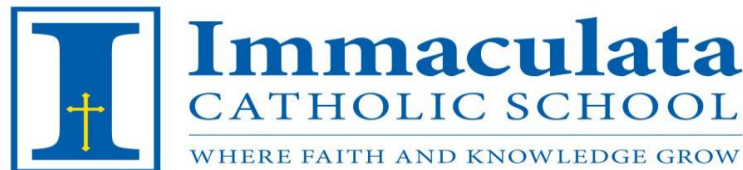
The non-profit works in four major areas:

- 1) **Laudato Si' Schools:*** Dedicated to integrating environmental education into the curriculum of Catholic schools. It is based on the Laudato Si' encyclical by Pope Francis which seeks to plant the seeds of ecological conversion for the next generation of Filipinos.
- 2) **Laudato Si' Campaign:** Works to promote ecological citizenship by instilling a sense of environmental commitment into the minds and hearts of all citizens.
- 3) **Divest-Invest:** Calls upon local financial institutions to move away from investing in industries that harm the environment, and instead, invest in sustainability.
- 4) **Disaster Response:** Involves engaging in relief efforts after natural disasters hit the Philippines.

Living Laudato Si' Philippines believes that together, we will make a sustainable future possible for everyone.

****Funds raised at the 2023 Advent Alternative Gift Fair will be designated to support the activities of the Laudato Si' Schools program to promote education and action by the youth for the protection of our Common Home.***





The Virgen de Guadalupe Scholarship Fund

Immaculata Catholic School (ICS), founded in 1909 by the Sisters of St. Dominic, has served the Durham community for over a hundred years. Immaculata is committed to serving students of many backgrounds and of various faiths from the Durham community and beyond. From its inception, ICS has been committed to the idea that a high-quality Catholic education should be available to any family. More than a century later, and under the leadership of our Franciscan Friars, Immaculata continues its legacy by educating students with the same focus and mission. At Immaculata, we believe that our diversity strengthens and unites us, and we are committed to ensuring that our community is a safe, loving, and supportive environment for all.

The Virgen de Guadalupe Scholarship Fund allows us to make an Immaculata education available to more families in our community by providing tuition assistance. The Fund will provide financial support for students in great need, especially those from immigrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking families.

Your support of The Virgen de Guadalupe Scholarship Fund provides access to education for families who believe in the importance of Catholic education as a foundation for their children. The Scholarship Fund creates opportunities for us to welcome students into our school who would otherwise be unable to attend.

Your gift to the scholarship allows us to provide students with:

- A dedicated and caring faculty devoted to the success of each student.
- A safe and loving environment for learning.
- An opportunity to attend Mass weekly and grow in faith.
- A high-quality education.





World Central Kitchen (WCK)

Founded in 2010 by Chef José Andrés, **World Central Kitchen** is a nonprofit organization that is first to the frontlines providing fresh meals in response to crises. Applying a model of quick action, leveraging local resources, and adapting in real time, WCK has served more than 300 million nourishing meals around the world.

When disaster strikes, WCK's Relief Team mobilizes with the urgency of now to start cooking and serving meals to people in need. By partnering with organizations on the ground and activating a network of local restaurants, food trucks, or emergency kitchens, WCK serves comforting meals to survivors of disasters quickly and effectively. To support regional economies, WCK prioritizes purchasing local ingredients to cook with or distribute directly to families in need. We know that good food provides not only nourishment, but also comfort and hope, especially in times of crisis.

World Central Kitchen is currently serving meals in Israel, Gaza, and Egypt. They currently have trucks loaded with food and water reaching the team in Gaza and are delivering items to Anera - their partner on the ground - who is distributing aid to thousands. They are also working with the Middle East Children's Alliance to scale up food kit distribution efforts. WCK teams are also on the ground in Israel supporting displaced families. To see more about their work in the region go to <https://wck.org/relief/middle-east-2023>

****Funds raised at the 2023 Advent Alternative Gift Fair will be designated to support the efforts to provide food in the Holy Land.***



20TH ANNUAL ADVENT ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR

JUSTICE, PEACE, AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION (JPIC)
IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CATHOLIC CHURCH

December 2-3, 2023

DONATION/TAX RECEIPT FORM

I AM MAKING THE FOLLOWING GIFTS:	AMOUNT	# OF CARDS
<input type="checkbox"/> Families Moving Forward	\$ _____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Furniture Project of Durham	\$ _____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Habitat for Humanity of Durham	\$ _____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> La 72 Migrant and Refugee Shelter	\$ _____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> LIFE Skills Foundation	\$ _____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Living Laudato Si' Philippines	\$ _____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Virgen de Guadalupe Scholarship Fund	\$ _____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> World Central Kitchen	\$ _____	_____

Please provide the following information to ensure the accurate distribution of your donation/tax receipt:

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____ City _____ State ____ Zip _____

We accept cash, credit cards, or a check written to Immaculate Conception Catholic Church

Cash Received \$ _____

OR

Credit Card Amount \$ _____ and Last 4 Digits of Credit Card _____

OR

Check # _____ and Check Amount \$ _____