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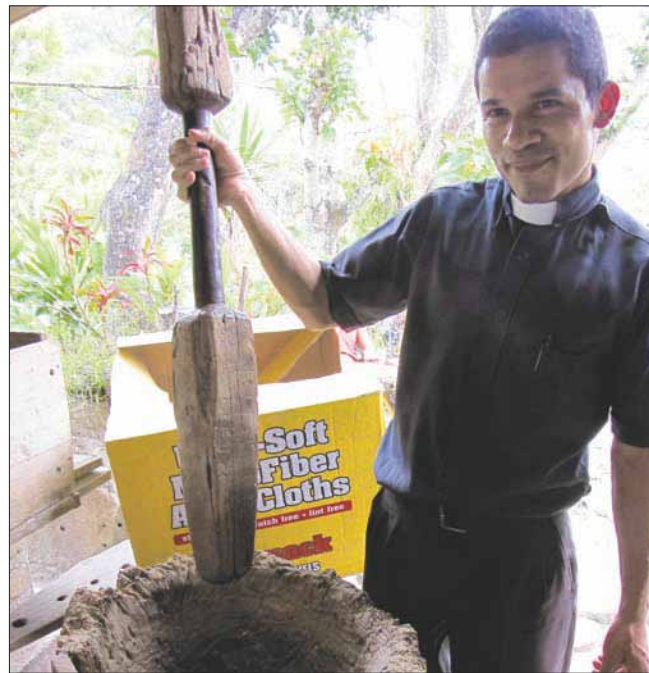
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Maximiliano Chavarria shows what individual coffee farmers use to crack the shells of coffee beans during the labor-intensive harvest.

Photo submitted by **MARISA ALVARADO**

Ministry aids Honduran coffee farmers, families

By **MARISA ALVARADO**
Contributor

Yong Oh made her first Honduran trip in 2007 while volunteering as a youth minister at St. Andrew Kim Catholic Church in Farmers Branch.

What started as a summer mission trip soon turned into something more when she witnessed families in the small mountain villages living in desolate poverty with no electricity or water. Their sole means of survival was coffee farming, a hard profession with little financial reward.

At the same time in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, The Shepherd's Café, a coffeehouse geared toward young adults to promote Catholic culture and vocations, had made its debut in April. So, Oh, the founder of The Shepherd's Café, put two and two together — or rather, coffee and coffee together. She came up with what would be the basic premise for Mission Coffee Ministry, a sub-ministry of The Shepherd's Café.

"The more I was buying from the big chains, the more I didn't like not helping the farmers financially," she said, "and each month the coffee was not there was a missed opportunity to help them."

In winter 2009, she went back to Honduras to see where The Shepherd's

IF YOU GO

What: The Shepherd's Café, A Monthly coffeehouse geared toward young adults to promote Catholic culture and vocations

When: 7 p.m. Saturday

Where: Mary Immaculate Catholic Church, 2800 Valwood Parkway in Farmers Branch

Cost: Free, but tax-deductible donations are accepted

More info: To learn more, visit neighborsgo.com/stories/72309 or theshepherdscafe.com.

Café might fit into this equation. Almost three years after her original Honduran mission trip, Oh was able to help the coffee farmers by making the Honduran coffee available for donation in April 2010. Those who donate to Mission Coffee Ministry can receive a free bag of coffee from Honduras or Nicaragua, with proceeds going back to help the farmers.

"I hope word will spread here in our community and people will help," Oh said. "God does so much. We have to do our part, too."

Marisa Alvarado contributes to neighborsgo.com on behalf of The Shepherd's Café.