



March 13, 2019

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

*Peace be with you!* We are now in the full swing of Lent, this time dedicated to the conversion of our hearts, to the deepening of our relationship with God and with others through prayer, to fasting and to giving alms. As we move towards Easter, we are invited to participate in Development and Peace – Caritas Canada's *Share Lent* campaign. Development and Peace is the official international solidarity organization of the Catholic Church in Canada, and the Canadian member of *Caritas Internationalis*. This year, the campaign invites us, as well as all other Caritas organizations in the world, to unite ourselves to Pope Francis, who launched the international *Share the Journey* campaign. The theme focusses on forced migration and promotes a culture of encounter.

On April 6 and 7, 2019, the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent, we will celebrate *Solidarity Sunday* throughout the country. On this Sunday, we are invited to reflect as a Church on the human face of forced migration and to carry in our prayers the millions of people forced to flee their homes because of war, persecution, and the consequences of climate change, among others. More than 68.5 million people throughout the world have faced this situation.

A first step on the journey towards encounter is to learn about what these migrants are experiencing. Pope Francis states that "Before the challenges of contemporary movements of migration, the only reasonable response is one of solidarity and mercy." At the heart of this solidarity, we meet Jesus Christ, a Jesus who is a stranger amongst strangers, a migrant amongst migrants, a refugee amongst refugees.

Development and Peace – Caritas Canada and its partners invite us to live out this solidarity and mercy. Our gift to the *Share Lent* campaign allows us to support community development programs and humanitarian aid, as well as to act on the deeper causes of forced migration. Development and Peace recently brought particular attention to the situation of the Rohingyas, who were forcibly exiled from Burma, as well as the civil war that forced more than 12 million Syrians to migrate elsewhere, especially to Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey.

The informational material for *Share Lent Share the Journey* is being distributed in all of our parishes. I encourage you to learn more by reading these publications, and I urge you to do your part in supporting the work of Development and Peace. Thanks to your generosity, Development and Peace supports projects with their partners in 37 countries in Africa, Latin

America, Asia and the Middle East. For more information, please contact Janelle Delorme, Manitoba's Regional Animator, at 204-231-2848 or [jdelorme@devp.org](mailto:jdelorme@devp.org).

**I wish to affirm, as Archbishop of St. Boniface, and together with my brother bishops of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) my support of Development and Peace and of their educational and fundraising efforts to support the projects of their partners in the South.** The CCCB is working closely, and has been for some time, with the National Council of Development and Peace and its administration to ensure that all of these projects and partners are compatible with the objectives, values, and teachings of the Church in terms of the integral development of the human person and of society.

**Therefore, I assure you that all funds collected in our diocese this year for the *Share Lent* campaign, as was the case last year, will be used to support justice, solidarity and peace, as envisioned by the Gospel and Catholic Social Teaching. And, in the very few cases where there is doubt about a partner, the CCCB and Development and Peace are working together to better elucidate the criteria for the selection of partners and to better verify the concrete situation of a partner in question.** Development and Peace has confirmed with the CCCB that the funds will not be released until a consensus has been reached between Development and Peace and the CCCB, and that all is in order.

In these last few years, substantial efforts have been made to reinforce the lines of communication between the administration of the CCCB (and therefore all bishops in Canada) and the National Council of Development and Peace and their Executive Director (and therefore all members of Development and Peace). I see the fruits of these more recent efforts.

I have full confidence that Development and Peace will remain the official international solidarity organization of the Catholic Church in Canada. **I am sure that our Development and Peace will continue, as it has been for over 50 years, to make a difference where our brothers and sisters in the Global South appeal to our solidarity and to our fraternal support of their many efforts for justice and peace according to God's design.** This confidence that I have is rooted especially in the local efforts at the parish and diocesan levels; you respond generously and wholeheartedly to these calls for help from the South. I am always meeting people who are so interested and engaged, and so faithful. They see clearly and have hearts full of hope in this movement of Development and Peace. Thank you for your witness.

Be assured of my prayers for you and your families during this Lent 2019, where we are called to change our hardened hearts and to go out and meet the migrants!

*+ Albert LeGatt*

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Archbishop of St. Boniface