OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

April 3, 2025

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

For seventy-eight years, the 5th Sunday of Lent, (April 6th, this year) has been designated as Solidarity Sunday in parishes across Canada, and is dedicated to the nationwide collection in support of the humanitarian work of Development and Peace. Your contributions last year supported over seventy community development and humanitarian aid projects in more than thirty countries, including Africa, South America, Asia, and the Middle East. Please be generous during this year's Share Lent Campaign. This will enable the continued support of international solidarity projects.

In addition, exceptionally in this Jubilee year and in contribution to a world-wide endeavour, a signature collection campaign is being run in parallel with Share Lent and will continue throughout the year. Please consider signing the petition "Turning Debt Into Hope". The first signatures will be used for advocacy at the G7 meeting to be held June 15-17, 2025 in Kananaskis, Alberta.

The theme for the 2025 campaign, Turn Debt into Hope, urges decision-makers to prioritize people and planet over mere profit, and demands debt justice for communities crushed by unjust and unpayable debts. Noting that more than one hundred countries in the Global South are facing a debt crisis, Development and Peace — Caritas Canada encourages us to act in ways that will help stop this crisis by cancelling and restructuring unjust and unsustainable debt, and to prevent other debt crises from happening by addressing their root causes.

Over three billion people now live in countries that spend more on debt servicing than on health or education. At the same time, the countries of the North owe them an "ecological debt" for the ways they may have exploited the resources, which destroys their environment.

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Pope Francis reminds us of this in these few words: “I would like to extend another urgent invitation to the richest nations to recognize the seriousness of many of the decisions they have taken and to forgive the debts of countries that will never be able to repay them. It's more a question of justice than magnanimity” (Spes non confundit).

Furthermore, in this Jubilee Year 2025, His Holiness invites Catholics to rekindle their hope and adopt a vision that can “give everyone access to the fruits of the earth”.

I encourage you to support the work of Development and Peace-Caritas Canada two ways this Lent. Please give generously to the Share Lent Campaign, either on-line at https://devp.org/give or through Share Lent collections in your parish. The second way is to sign the petition and encourage others to do so, at https://devp.org/debt.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

✠Richard W. Smith
Archdiocesan Administrator
Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton