

SYMBOLS OF SOLIDARITY

The Symbols of Solidarity is an optional activity designed to visually illustrate the theme of the 2020 Share Lent campaign. If the pastor and the parish agree, the symbols can be used in a procession before or after Mass or during an activity organized in your community. If you plan to present the Symbols of Solidarity before or after Mass, please coordinate with the pastoral team of your parish to organize the presentation. You may also consider including the symbols as part of your parish Share Lent display. Schools are also invited to display these symbols in a suitable location.

Organization and execution

The Symbols of Solidarity presentation generally takes less than 10 minutes but can be shortened or lengthened as needed. Here are some suggestions that will help you to present the symbols:

Location

Determine in advance where the symbols will be placed after the procession. You could, for instance, if the pastor and parish agree, place them in the sanctuary on a decorated table or in another location set aside for this purpose.

Presenter

Designate in advance a person who will present the symbols. You could call on a different person to present each symbol.

Presentation

- The Symbols of Solidarity activity can be done at different moments, depending on what is most appropriate for your parish. Begin the presentation with a procession that is led by the people holding the symbols.
- Once the procession has ended and people are seated, the person presenting the symbols may begin.
- When a symbol is presented, the person holding it presents it to the congregation. Once the symbol is presented, he or she places it down in the designated location and then steps aside to make way for the presentation of the next symbol. When the symbols have all been presented, the people return to their seats

Text for the Presentation of the Symbols of Solidarity

Lent is a sacred period of conversion – a time to prepare for Easter and renew our baptismal promises by repenting our sinful ways, turning toward new life and better serving God and our neighbours. This Lent, Development and Peace — Caritas Canada focuses our attention on our neighbours in the Amazon region. We are called to stand in solidarity with peoples whose cultures and livelihoods are under threat.

Every person’s lifestyle affects the future of the planet and the future of all humanity. Our economic system encourages us to adopt a lifestyle of consumerism. Pope Francis invites us to an ecological conversion through which we move towards greater respect for the Earth and solidarity with the poorest people of our common home, including those who live in the Amazon, who are the hope of the Church and humankind.

Development and Peace’s partners in the Global South stand alongside people whose lands and resources are being stolen. The Symbols of Solidarity we present to you today reflect the threats faced by the people of the Amazon and the work done by Development and Peace’s partners to combat those threats.

Symbols



- A **burnt stick** to symbolize illegal logging and deforestation.



- A **bowl of earth or sand and a mineral rock** to symbolize both, the richness of the Earth and its exploitation.



- A **large feather** symbolizing Indigenous knowledge and culture.



- A **tree or plant in a pot** to symbolize biodiversity and the hope that arises from our personal action to become guardians of the forests.

1st Symbol: A burnt stick

This burnt stick symbolizes illegal logging and deforestation which threaten ecosystems, wildlife and peoples of the Earth, especially in the Amazon. Logging strips the land, which is then used for cattle ranching and industrial agriculture. Traditional and Indigenous communities are pushed away from their land and way of life. They are often intimidated, persecuted or criminalized when standing up for their rights and the rights of the Earth.

In Brazil, the livelihood of traditional rubber tappers, the *seringueiros* is threatened. They practise sustainable hunting, gathering, fishing and rubber tapping in Brazil's Rondônia State and their right to live off the land is recognized by the state. Yet, large logging companies are driving the *seringueiros* from their lands; deploying tactics like kidnapping, arson and murder to silence resistance. The Pastoral Land Commission (CPT), a long-time partner of Development and Peace, is supporting the *seringueiros* by helping them challenge unjust land distribution and seizures. The CPT also promotes human rights, ecological justice and land reform.

2nd Symbol: A bowl of earth or sand and a mineral rock

This bowl of earth (sand) symbolizes both, the richness of the Earth and its exploitation through resource extraction and pollution. This mineral rock unearthed from the soil represents mining, an activity too often carried out without the free, prior and informed consent of local populations and that rarely benefits them. Instead of generating improved living conditions, it generates pollution, destruction, poverty and death.

In Brazil, the lands and livelihood of the Mura Indigenous people, who are hunters, fishers and gatherers, are being threatened by a large potash mine. The company did not properly consult the Mura. With the government of Brazil ignoring Indigenous rights and deregulating resource exploitation, it is becoming harder and harder for local populations to resist such large-scale projects, which are often financed by international and Canadian corporations. Development and Peace's partner, the Indigenous Missionary Council (CIMI), help peoples like the Mura fight their causes more effectively. CIMI helps oppressed communities organize, litigate, advocate and publicize their causes.

3rd Symbol: A large feather

This feather symbolizes Indigenous knowledge and culture. Indigenous peoples have always lived in harmony with nature, caring for it and taking only what they need. They see the Earth not as something to exploit, but as a Mother who protects and nurtures them and that they protect and nurture in return.

Yesica Patiachi Tayori, of the Harakbut people in Amazonian Peru, says, "From our ancestors, we gain our vision of the world, that the forest is our house, that the river is our brother, that all the animals and beings that live in the jungle, in the Amazon, are part of us." In Peru, Development and Peace works with CAAAP, the Amazon Centre of Anthropology and Practical Application, to protect the rainforest and the rights of its Indigenous inhabitants. CAAAP trains Indigenous elders, women and youths in community organizing and the defence of territorial rights. With its support, young Indigenous leaders, including Yesica, joined the president of CAAAP, Bishop Alfredo Vizcarra, in participating in the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region.

4th Symbol: A tree or plant in a pot

This tree (plant) symbolizes biodiversity and the hope that arises from our personal action to become guardians of the forests. Resource exploitation, deforestation and land grabbing threaten the future of the peoples of the Amazon and, ultimately, all the peoples of the world. The Amazon rainforest is the garden of Mother Earth. It holds a fifth of our planet's fresh water, a third of its forests and half of the world's species of plants and animals.

Support Development and Peace's campaign, *For our Common Home*. Make at least one personal lifestyle change that will help protect the Earth, our common home. The choices we make can be signs of either life or death for the rainforest and its people.

Conclusion of the presentation of the Symbols of Solidarity by the presenter

The Development and Peace Share Lent campaign invites us to be fellow travelers with the Indigenous peoples and the rubber tappers of the Amazon region. We now invite you to shake hands with your neighbour to express solidarity with each other and with all people around the world who share our common home. May the Lord lead us all to an ecological conversion.