

MESSAGE FOR PARISHES AND SCHOOLS

My dearest sisters and brothers,

My name is _____.
It is a great joy for me to have the opportunity to address you today on behalf of Development and Peace – Caritas Canada, and I wish to thank Father _____ for offering me this space.

This year, our Church’s international solidarity organization is entering its 50th year of existence. Faith in Jesus Christ and his compassion for the poor and marginalized are at the heart of the work of Development and Peace. Almost 50 years ago, Canada’s bishops mandated the organization to act against injustice, promote integral human development, and ensure universal access to the goods of creation, all fundamental principles of Catholic social teaching.

Through Development and Peace, our Church here in Canada has shown solidarity with millions of women and men who have taken action to ensure access to education and democracy, to defend the rights of their communities, to feed their families, and to live in peace.

This solidarity has also been expressed during major humanitarian crises, such as Hurricane Mitch in Central America, the tsunami in Indonesia, the earthquake in Haiti, the drought in the Horn of Africa, and the war in Syria, to only name a few.

Our sisters and brothers in the Global South also count on us here in Canada to take action to influence the decisions and policies of our government and our businesses, decisions that impact the root causes of poverty and injustice.

In recent decades, members of Development and Peace have made their voices – and those of oppressed populations – heard through our education and mobilization campaigns.

Whether fighting against dictatorships in Latin America, for the end of the apartheid regime in South Africa, against militarization, for the

respect of rights by mining companies, or for policies that guarantee access to water and seeds, the members of our international solidarity organization have been at the heart of change.

The suffering of millions of people continues to call on our compassion, and pushes us to mobilize. We are not indifferent to those who are hungry, who do not have access to education or justice, whose rights are not respected, or who must live each day with the violence and persecution of war. This is why we must continue to be *At the Heart of the Action!* This year, Development and Peace is inviting you to do exactly that by becoming a member and taking action.

When you become a member of Development and Peace, you join your voice with thousands of others who, over the last 50 years, have said, and continue to say, no to injustice and to indifference, and yes to love and solidarity for human dignity and peace.

As of today, you can become a member of Development and Peace and take concrete actions.

You can sign our action card in support of the women and men who work the land on small family farms, producing a large share of the world’s food. These people are nevertheless the first to suffer from hunger and poverty and to experience the negative impacts of climate change.

By asking our government to put small family farms at the heart of its policies to help the poorest countries, we will act effectively to reduce the effects of climate change, while enabling millions of women and men to produce wholesome foods to feed their families, their communities, and the world, while preserving our common home, the Earth.

Your participation and solidarity are essential. Together, we can change our world!
