

SYMBOLS OF SOLIDARITY

The Symbols of Solidarity are designed to be used in a procession before or during Mass or at other gatherings. If you would like to propose that the symbols be part of the procession of the offerings at Mass, it will be important to first consult with the pastor or liturgy planning committee to see if it is possible. Schools can consider keeping these symbols present throughout Lent in the chapel or other appropriate visible place.

The procession of each symbol starts as a narrator begins to read each section, and it ends at the front of the church or room. You may wish to have just one narrator, or different voices for each. Allow brief pauses between symbols to create a dramatic effect. The entire procession takes between 10 and 15 minutes. The presenters of the symbols should remain at the front of the church or room where they will join hands after the presentation of the last symbol.

You will need:

- A place to put the symbols after they are carried in – perhaps close to the sanctuary, on a table decorated for this purpose, or a special area in the room where the procession will take place.
- A potted plant, as a symbol of land.
- A house built out of cardboard or other items from the recycling bin, as a symbol of lodging.
- Work gloves, as a symbol of labour.
- A picture of a dove with an olive branch, as a symbol of peace.

INTRODUCTION

“Tierra (*tee - era*), techo (*tay - cho*), y (*ee*) trabajo (*trah- bah- ho*):” These are the words of His Holiness Pope Francis. He reminds us that land, labour and lodging are at the core of human dignity. In this Jubilee Year of Mercy, the practice of pilgrimage holds a special place as it opens our hearts to compassion and love. As we embark on this pilgrimage of solidarity, let us fill our hearts with compassion and love for those who are seeking dignity: a roof over their heads, work to provide for their families and land to live on and grow their food from. During this Holy Year, Pope Francis encourages us to “[open] our hearts to those living on the outermost fringes of society: fringes which modern society itself creates.” (*Misericordiae Vultus* 15) Today, we offer these symbols to Create a Climate of Change within our hearts, to transform our lives so that our sisters and brothers can live in dignity.

1st symbol – A plant

I am 13-year-old Liz Benítez from Paraguay. This plant represents “TIERRA” (*tee - era*), the land; the land my community needs to live. Care of the land is vital to the health of Mother Earth, but the family farmers in my country who care for the land are victims of huge inequalities and are losing access to their land. Sometimes, they are even violently threatened. In Paraguay, with your help, Development and Peace is supporting peasant farmers, like my father, in defending their land rights.

2nd symbol – A house

I am Try Mopurto from Indonesia. This house represents “TECHO” (*tay - cho*), lodging, the homes that protect and shelter us from the outdoor elements. Having a peaceful and solid house is vital for stability in one’s life. I lived in a house that had thin walls and a weak roof, and because it is in a slum, the government ignored us. Through Development and Peace, you are supporting its partner Arkomjogja, an association of community architects, that is working in some of the poorest slums in Indonesia. They are helping people have decent housing that addresses the real needs of the community. Today, I have a house that is safe and warm for my family.

3rd symbol – Work gloves

I am Adonis Mejine from Haiti. These work gloves represent “TRABAJO” (*trah- bah- ho*), the hard labour of all of us who simply want to provide for our families, despite our humble circumstances. With weathered hands, we work long hours so we can feed our families and send our children to school. Today, I have a steady job at BON POUL, a social enterprise that specializes in raising and marketing chickens. This local business was started by Famn Deside, whose mission is to improve the status of women in Haitian society, and who saw the need for women to have access to employment. Your solidarity through Development and Peace helps to give labour to many.

4th Symbol – A dove with an olive branch

I am a Sister of the Salesians of Don Bosco community in the Cremisan Valley in Bethlehem. This symbol of peace, which originated with early Christians, is ever so needed today in the Holy Land. Our community has been present in the Cremisan Valley since the 19th century, but we are at risk of being separated from the community that we so diligently serve, including 450 children for whom we provide educational services, due to the construction of an annexation wall. Development and Peace’s partner, the Society of St. Yves, is a Catholic human rights centre that takes on the cases of the most disenfranchised to help them access justice in the midst of daily human rights abuses. They accompany us in defending our rights so that we can continue to live our calling amongst our community and in peace.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

(The celebrant can be asked to pray these words.)

Let us pray:

Loving Creator,

We place these Symbols of Solidarity
before you.

We offer them knowing that we must
convert our hearts and our ways so everyone
may have dignity in life.

We pray for those who seek
land, lodging and labour.

We pray for those who seek
justice and peace.

Help us Create a Climate of Change
within our hearts and homes,
and around the world.

May we become more compassionate and
merciful to all our sisters and brothers.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

