



# Archdiocese of Winnipeg

Office of the Archbishop

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March 21, 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I bring you greetings during this Holy Season of Lent as we journey together toward the joy of Easter. May this Lenten Season be a time of growth in faith and charity for you and your families.

This year, the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace – Caritas Canada, is adding its voice to those of Pope Francis and the *Caritas Internationalis* organizations across the world by inviting Canadians to *Share the Journey* with migrants and refugees who are forced to flee their homes.

As Catholics, Pope Francis invites us to enter a *Culture of Encounter*. This means taking a compassionate interest in the experiences of migrant people. Never before, in the history of the world, has there been such a movement of migrants and refugees, many of whom come from parts of the world under great stress. Our compassionate encounter with such people will lead to a transformation of the heart both for those providing aid as well as for the migrants themselves. A culture of encounter prepares us to welcome new sisters and brothers into our country and communities, to be part of their migratory journey, to create life-long bonds and to write together a story of solidarity. Our faith teaches us that in all such encounters Jesus is present as he identifies with those on the peripheries and with those fleeing danger. The Holy Family at one time became a refugee family in a foreign land. Jesus even gave us a parable about the Good Samaritan where we find a great example of hospitality shown to a stranger in need.

On April 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, we will celebrate *Solidarity Sunday* in every diocese across Canada. This day represents an opportunity to reflect as a Church on the human reality of forced migration. Today, 68.5 million women, men and children around the world have fled their homes. We will be invited to bring these forced migrants into our prayers, but also to give generously in support of the development programs and humanitarian aid destined to assist those forced into migration and to act on the root causes of such a movement of peoples.

With the blessing of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB), I would like to add my full support to the 2019 Share Lent collection. Following my last letter, dated November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018, I wish to assure you that all of the 2018 Share Lent funds have been sent to Development and Peace. I am very satisfied that Development and Peace has begun the important work of reform which will ensure that all of the partners in the Developing World through which Development and Peace works, will be in compliance with the moral standards of the Catholic Church and Caritas Internationalis. Furthermore, last year's funds along with those for 2019 will not be used for the partners that are still currently under review, until everything has been mutually agreed upon by both the CCCB and Development and Peace. I am grateful for the good spirit of solidarity that has been evident between the bishops and Development and Peace during this period of review of the development partners.

Your gift in solidarity with the poor is vital to the mission of Development and Peace and its ability to help, to respect and to promote social justice with communities in the Global South. You are invited to donate through your Share Lent envelope or online at [devp.org/give](http://devp.org/give).

During this Lenten season, let us be compassionate to our sister and brother migrants. Let us join them in solidarity for a better world. Together, we can transform fear and hate into messages of love, compassion and welcome. *"I was a stranger, and you welcomed me."* Mt 25:35.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Richard Gagnon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R' and a long horizontal flourish at the end.

✦Richard Gagnon  
Archbishop of Winnipeg