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To all Parish Priests, Parish Administrators and Parishioners,

At the concluding mass of the Pan Amazonian Synod last fall, Pope Francis in his homily said: “The cry of the poor is the Church’s cry of hope. When we make their cry our own, we can be certain, our prayer too will reach to the clouds.” As we approach the season of Lent, we are called to be conscious of new opportunities to grow closer to God, to God’s people and to God’s Creation – our common home.

I wish to express my support for *Development & Peace – Caritas Canada’s* 2020 Share Lent campaign, and to encourage your own support and the participation of your parish communities. Your parish probably has already received an envelope of materials that explain the campaign and provide excellent resources for its implementation. Additional resources can also be found and ordered at www.dev.org/lent/resources.

This year’s Share Lent campaign, ‘*For Our Common Home*’, invites Canadian Catholics to improve our relationship with God’s Creation by connecting us to one of the earth’s most important ecosystems – the Amazon. The campaign’s liturgical and educational resources provide information about the importance of the Amazon and introduce us to the incredibly brave witnesses of Christ who struggle every day to protect it. The partners featured by Development & Peace during Lent 2020 are a collection of Catholic networks and justice groups who have heard and responded to the cries of the earth and of the poor in their communities – as we are all called to do.

It is in this spirit that I encourage each parish to participate in the Solidarity Sunday national collection for Development & Peace, **on Sunday March 29th**. I suggest that this important contribution be taken up as a second collection so as to maintain the distinction between the regular offertory collection which has liturgical meaning and this special collection for the work of the Canadian Church in the developing world.

It is important to note that ongoing efforts to reinforce the collaboration between the National Council of Development and Peace and the Canadian Catholic Conference of Bishops persist to ensure that the teachings of the social doctrine of the Church are lived out faithfully and that all collected funds are well distributed.

For questions about the Share Lent Campaign, please contact your parish’s Development and Peace representative, Rose-Marie Valade, our Diocesan Chair (Rose-Marie.Valade@devp.org), Chris Duncanson-Hales, National Member (cduncanson@devp.org, 705.561.2770), or Luke Stocking, our regional Director (lstocking@devp.org, 416 922-1592 ext. 225).

Yours in Christ,

+Marcel Damphousse
Bishop of Sault Ste. Marie