



March 25, 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In this Jubilee year Pope Francis has called us to be Pilgrims of Hope. It is in response to this call that Development and Peace—Caritas Canada, the official international solidarity organization of the Canadian Catholic Church, is joining the global campaign *Turn Debt into Hope*. In the Scriptures, the Jubilee is characterized by three actions: the land is left to rest, slaves are set free, and debts are forgiven. Our Church calls on the faithful to continue to live out this tradition today.

In the spirit of the biblical Jubilee tradition, we join with Caritas partners around the world and call for the alleviation of the unjust and insurmountable debt burden for so many countries in the Global South today. More than 3.3 billion people currently live in countries that spend more on interest payments alone than on education, healthcare, and climate mitigation combined.

Pope Francis reminds us of our ecological debt to the Global South countries. Resources in the Global South are exploited by countries in the Global North with disastrous consequences for the environment. Rectifying this imbalance is not only an act of charity, but a call to justice. International debts represent a matter of life and death for our brothers and sisters in the Global South.

In *Spes non confundit*, the bull announcing the Jubilee Year 2025, Pope Francis invites us to address such injustices: “Another heartfelt appeal that I would make in light of the coming Jubilee is directed to the more affluent nations. I ask that they acknowledge the gravity of so many of their past decisions and determine to forgive the debts of countries that will never be able to repay them. More than a question of generosity, this is a matter of justice.” (§16)

Therefore, as part of our Jubilee journey I encourage you to participate in the campaign of Development and Peace. On Sunday April 6th, the Fifth Sunday of Lent, we will take up a Share Lent collection in support of Development and Peace. Please give generously.

In addition, please visit www.devp.org. Explore the resources to see how we can act in solidarity with our global partners to address the root causes of poverty, and to open the way for all to live in the dignity which is our right as creatures in the image of God.

Yours in Christ our Redeemer,

+ Michael Brehl, C.Ss.R.

✠ Michael Brehl, C.Ss.R.