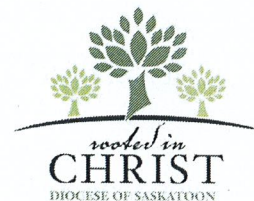




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March 19, 2019
Solemnity of St. Joseph

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ of the Diocese of Saskatoon:


I greet you during this Lenten season, and to request your support for the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace. CCODP was set up by the Bishops of Canada in 1967. Its purpose is: a) to help people in need; and, b) to educate the people of our country about the causes of poverty and injustice. You can find out more about the mission and work of CCODP at their website:

www.devop.org

This year's theme is "Share the Journey." Catholics around the world have joined this global campaign, which was launched earlier this year by the Holy Father, Pope Francis.

There are currently 68.5 million forced migrants in the world: families who have been forced to abandon their homes and livelihoods. For example, 1.5 million Syrians have fled to Lebanon, meaning that there is currently one refugee for every four Lebanese. To put that in context, that would be the same as the city of Saskatoon attempting to host fifty thousand refugees. Reflecting on how we would respond to a need that large helps us understand the urgency of this situation. If so many people came to our community seeking shelter, we would struggle to meet their basic needs of housing and food.

Pope Francis urges us to foster a culture of encounter, whereby we are open to being informed and transformed as we face these difficult realities and find ways to address these very serious needs. It is in this spirit that Development and Peace invites us into the *Share the Journey* campaign. Locally, schools and parishes are organizing walks to show solidarity with forced migrants. These walks are a way to make a concrete act in solidarity with the many who are suffering.

 In all things we are *rooted in Christ*,
in His desire to bring God's love to all peoples.

April 7, 2019 is the 5th Sunday of Lent, and is the day we celebrate as “Share Lent” Sunday. I encourage us to participate in CCODP and the “Share the Journey” appeal in our prayer, and by making personal and community commitments to live simply and in solidarity with the poor and needy in our communities and in the world, and to financially support this year’s Share Lent Solidarity Sunday special collection.

I close by imploring us to remember Jesus’s words: “*Come, you that are blessed by my Father ...for I was hungry and you gave me food, ...I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ...I was naked and you gave me clothing, ...Truly I tell you, just as you did this to one of the least of these of my family, you did it to me.*” (See Matthew 25: 34, 35, 36, 40.)

Thank you for your attention, prayer and support.

In Christ,



✠ Most Reverend Mark A. Hagemoen
Bishop of Saskatoon