

Share Lent Campaign 2013

Reflection (Fourth Sunday)

Thank you Father _____ for giving me the opportunity to speak today.

Good morning/Good evening. My name is _____ and I'm here to talk to you on behalf of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace.

Human Dignity is the central theme of DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE's Share Lent campaign this year. You may be familiar with this principle of Catholic social teaching, but may not have had the opportunity to really reflect on what it means to our Faith.

It comes from the understanding that we are all made in the image of God. Human life is sacred and the human person is the closest reflection of God amongst us. How we treat each other is also how we treat God. As such, every single person in the world, regardless of their race, age, or social status has the same human dignity. When we do not respect the human dignity of others, we are, in effect, not respecting God. We are called to reconcile our differences and ensure right relationships between all of God's children so that we can also be in a right relationship with God. This respect for human dignity, and right relationships, is fundamental to the mission of DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE.

Today's readings reveal God's gift of reconciliation through divine mercy, and our mission as a community of believers. The Gospel reading tells us how the Pharisees and scribes accuse Jesus of inappropriate relationships because he is associating with sinners. Jesus responds to their accusations with the parable of The Prodigal Son. Through this parable, we see our own failings, both in the character of the Prodigal Son, who lost his way and broke his relationship with his Father, and in that of the Brother, who through jealousy broke his relationship with his younger brother.

Like the Prodigal Son we are called to reconciliation with God. And like the Brother, we are called to reconcile with our brothers and sisters, and love them as the Holy Father loves us.

Since its creation in 1967 by the Canadian Bishops, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE has been tasked with fighting poverty and oppression – and building right relationships with those living in injustice in the Global South. Its very reason for being is to enable Canadian Catholics to put God's love – Caritas – into action by building these right relationships that respect the human dignity of every person on Earth. We are the heart, hands and voice of God in the world. Your gift of solidarity, whether it be a donation for a worthy project or speaking out against an injustice affecting the Global South, tells the world of God's love and mercy.

Around the world, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE is working with local partners to end poverty and oppression. The local partner organizations that it works with support human dignity in very tangible ways. Like the case of Ms. Gulandam, aged 50, who lives with her husband and 12 children in a region of ongoing war and violent conflict in Afghanistan. With the help of DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE partner, The Afghan Women's Resource Centre, she was able to regain her dignity by becoming a small-business leader in her community. Her story demonstrates what can happen - even in the most challenging of circumstances - when there is support to initiatives that uphold the principle of human dignity.

In the last 45 years, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE has supported over 16,000 local initiatives in agriculture, education and community action, as well as advocating for peace and human rights in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East.

This important work is made possible by your support.

Next Sunday is Solidarity Sunday, the Sunday which is set aside for Catholics across Canada to support DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE'S apostolic mission. I urge you to join with us in the Gospel witness of charity and justice. Please donate generously to help build the Kingdom of God.

Thank you for your time. Thank you Father _____.

Introductory notes:

This reflection is based on the readings of the Fourth Sunday of Lent. Please feel free to adjust the text for use on other days and other weeks. The readings for the Fourth Sunday are: Joshua 5: 9a, 10-12; Psalm 33-34; 2 Corinthians 5: 17-21; Luke 15: 1-3, 11-32.