



March 6, 2025

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Warm greetings and joy to you, in this year of Jubilee, 2025! In response to the call of Pope Francis and inspired by our Catholic social teaching, Development and Peace together with the global Caritas confederation launches the Lenten campaign [Turn Debt into Hope](#) to mark the Jubilee year. Hence, I invite you to participate in this year's Share Lent campaign.

The campaign primarily calls for debt cancellation on poorer countries by wealthy nations. This is exactly the appeal of Pope Francis to affluent nations to: "determine to forgive the debts of countries that would never be able to repay them" (*Spes Non Confundit*, 16).

Debt forgiveness is in the Judeo-Christian tradition and can be traced to the Old Testament. We read how during a Jubilee year, God decreed that slaves would go free, the land would rest, and debts would be forgiven (Deut. 15:1-2). In this way, we see one of God's many provisions to care for the rights of creation and to restore justice to the impoverished among us.

Pope Francis, the Canadian Catholic Bishops Conference, and the entire Caritas network recognize the importance of this singular act of debt forgiveness and how it would impact on millions of our brothers and sisters across the world. This is because 3.3 billion people in our world live in countries where the cost of their national debt is higher than what they spend on education and health care. Instead of channeling their resources to critical sectors to better the lives of their people, Global South countries in 2023 spent 33% of their government revenues servicing debt (Elaazjahr/Misereor, 2024).

This Share Lent request will be promoted across 162 Catholic Caritas sisters operating in 200 countries around the world. Development and Peace helps answer the question "who is my neighbour?" by connecting to the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10) and drawing attention to our vulnerable neighbors in the Global South who are in dire need of our help. Thanks to you, Development and Peace, through its programs, has delivered life-saving and life-giving aid through vibrant partnerships all over the world. The 2023/2024 annual report reveals 11.2 million people being reached through 79 different community projects in 34 countries this past year.

Therefore, I request you to participate in this year's Share lent campaign. In addition to contributing financially to Development and Peace on the Fifth Sunday of Lent (April 6, annual Solidarity Collection), I also encourage you to sign the "Turn Debt into Hope" petition which will be in the parishes from the second weekend of Lent (March 16). The petition exhorts our elected leaders and global financial institutions to forgive debts, provide debt-free financial aid for climate change adaptation, and to build a truly just debt framework at the United Nations.

By our generous participation in this campaign, we can experience that "year of the Lord's favour" that Jesus Christ proclaimed (Luke 4:16). And we can truly be, pilgrims of hope, in solidarity with one another (our sisters and brothers in the Global South).

Sincerely in Christ,

+ Brian J. Dunn

†Brian Joseph Dunn  
Archbishop of Halifax-Yarmouth

Please sign the petition: [www.devp.org/debt](http://www.devp.org/debt)

Please give generously. [www.devp.org/give](http://www.devp.org/give)