



ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF REGINA OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

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share lent 2019

To the Pastor / Pastoral Associate/ Faithful of the Archdiocese of Regina

(To be read on the 3rd Sunday in Lent: March 23rd & 24th)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Warm greetings as we journey through the Lenten season, and rejoice in the coming of Spring after a stretch of harsh weather.

It is a time of year when we are invited to attend to the harsh circumstances that many of our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world live with day in and day out. Through the global Catholic campaign of *Share the Journey*, Pope Francis has asked the faithful of the Church to consider the plight of migrants and refugees in our world and to offer support. Following his leadership, Development and Peace continues the theme of forced migration into this year's Share Lent campaign.

There are currently 68.5 million forced migrants in the world - families who have been forced to abandon their homes and livelihoods. Statistics like that are sometimes difficult to put into context. The vast majority remain close to their homelands and live in the poorest regions of the world. The situation in Lebanon can give us a more vivid picture. 1.5 million Syrians have fled to Lebanon, meaning that there is currently one refugee for every four Lebanese. To put that in a closer context, that would be the same as the city of Regina alone attempting to host fifty thousand refugees. You can do the math in terms of what that would mean in your community.

Imagining how we would try to cope in such a sea of need helps us to 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. This scenario seems impossible and beyond belief for us but it is the reality lived every day in Lebanon. The Lebanese are forced to do what we might find intolerable and they do so with less wealth and resources than we have available.

Pope Francis urges us to foster a culture of encounter, whereby we open ourselves to being informed and transformed as we learn about these difficult realities and find ways of addressing people's needs. In light of this, 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. If you would like to participate in a walk or organize one, please be in touch with our new regional animator, Cody Redekop, at credekop@devp.org.

Meanwhile, April 7th, the 5th Sunday of Lent, is Solidarity Sunday, the Church's day for the annual Share Lent collection. I ask you to give generously to our collection so that resources can be directed towards not only the refugees in Lebanon and elsewhere, but in tackling the root causes of forced migration. Please join me this Lent in spiritually sharing the migrants' journey with prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

Yours in Christ,

✠ Donald J. Bolen
Archbishop of Regina

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