



From A Bishop's Journal (684)

Development and Peace Celebrates 40 Years

In 1967 the Canadian bishops created the Canadian Catholic Organisation for Development and Peace in order to bring new meaning, through Lenten sharing, to this annual Christian experience. However, two other reasons prompted the decision: to come to the aid of our destitute brothers and sisters in a response of faith, and to educate the Canadian population regarding the scandal of poverty here and elsewhere, and the great rift between the rich and the poor. The response given these forty years by the faithful is altogether extraordinary: may all these donors be thanked a hundredfold for all they have done throughout the years, and may the same enthusiasm be with them to keep them watchful for unacceptable situations in the Third World, especially those with roots in our own country.

Pope John XXIII

Despite his very short papal ministry (1958-1963), Pope John XXIII left us a legacy that we are not finished exploring. After convening an ecumenical council on January 24, 1959, John XXIII gave us two of the most important encyclicals. On May 15, 1961 he published *Mater et Magistra* on human rights; this document would set the tone for the first discussions of Vatican Council II. Then on April 11, 1963, he published the extraordinary *Pacem in Terris* which would be welcomed by all the nations as “good Pope John’s” spiritual testament. Peace is founded on justice, truth, freedom, and love: these are the four great pillars of true peace. On October 11, 1962, John XXIII inaugurated the First Session of Vatican Council II by stressing the need for spiritual renewal in the Church, an *aggiornamento* to be done, that the Church be faithful and credible to all humankind, that it welcome the other Churches, and stop the prophets of doom who go about preaching malediction, for the future.

Pope Paul VI

June 21, 1963 marks the election of Pope Paul VI, one of the great popes of modern times. He continued the Vatican Council, presiding the Second Session on June 29. A short while later – on October 4 – he was greeted at the United Nations. “No more war! No more war!” And this was to be one of the main aspects of his pontifical ministry. He did surprising things: in December, 1963, he was the first pope to visit the Holy Land; he sold for the benefit of the poor the tiara [the triple crown] that the people of Milan had given him at his coronation. He would be the one to promulgate the 16 Council documents, especially the Pastoral Constitution on *The Church in the Modern World*,

December 7, 1965. A few months later, on March 26, 1967, he published his remarkable encyclical on the development of peoples, *Populorum Progressio*, which is the parent of Development and Peace. He created the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, and established the annual World Day of Peace, celebrated each year on New Year's Day.

The New Name for Peace

For Pope Paul VI, the new name for peace is really the development of every man and of all humankind. Let us read these words of his outstanding encyclical: "Today we see men trying to secure a sure food supply, cures for diseases, and steady employment. We see them trying to eliminate every ill, to remove every obstacle which offends man's dignity. They are continually striving to exercise greater personal responsibility, to do more, learn more, and have more so that they might increase their personal worth. And yet, at the same time, a large number of them live amid conditions which frustrate these legitimate desires... In the present day, however, individual and group effort within these countries is no longer enough. The world situation requires the concerted effort of everyone, a thorough examination of every facet of the problem – social, economic, cultural and spiritual... In God's plan, every man is born to seek self-fulfilment, for every human life is called to some task by God... Each man is a member of society; hence he belongs to the community of man. It is not just certain individuals but all men who are called to further the development of human society as a whole... The reality of human solidarity brings us not only benefits but also obligations.... The present state of affairs must be confronted boldly, and its concomitant injustices must be challenged and overcome... Finally, a word to those of you who have heard the cries of needy nations and have come to their aid. We consider you the promoters and apostles of genuine progress and true development. Genuine progress does not consist in wealth sought for personal comfort or for its own sake; rather it consists in an economic order designed for the welfare of the human person, where the daily bread that each man receives reflects the glow of brotherly love and the helping hand of God."

From the Heart of Our Church

The Canadian bishops had already looked at different ways to aid the needy populations, especially through the many Canadian missionaries throughout the world. However, Pope Paul's appeal raised other pan-Canadian responses, several of which would be handed over to lay men and women. At one of their plenary meetings, the Canadian bishops laid the foundations of a project they wanted to present to all the Canadian Catholics. They launched an organisation dedicated to international cooperation for the socio-economic development of poor nations. The bishops wanted to reach all the Catholics in every diocese and parish through information activities, formation, and contributions to a common fund, thus committing the people to the vast experience of the development of peoples. Far from wanting to go it alone, they firmly desired to work in close collaboration with the other Churches, private associations, and governmental and international services.

Share Lent

In introducing the new organisation, the Canadian bishops wrote: "Note that we are appealing on behalf of the poor during the Lenten season. At this time of year our thoughts turn to the suffering Christ who shed his blood out of love for all men. We are aware that we who want to call ourselves his disciples, must share his love and compassion by sacrificing generously, as this love compels us.

May this Lent therefore be for us an opportunity to take on lovingly and generously the cause of the under-privileged.” Happy and fruitful anniversary!

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