Good morning my name is ___________, and I am grateful for this opportunity to invite you to support our Parish’s Share Lent campaign for Development and Peace.

I believe, as our campaign states, that we have “sow much love to give.”

Development and Peace is the response of the Catholic Church in Canada to the cry of the poor throughout the world. Our partnerships with the poor and marginalized throughout Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East have helped put an end to the suffering and injustice faced by so many of our sisters and brothers. These partnerships are only possible through your generosity and support.

Without you, people like Mr. Ramon Apit from the Philippines, would not be living with hope for the future. Mr. Apit lives in Tacloban – one of the worst hit areas of the typhoon. His community had not been included on the government list to receive humanitarian aid, even though they had lost everything and been without food for a week. Like so many others, they slipped through the cracks. Thanks to our local partnership with the Urban Poor Associates, that has changed. Mr. Apit’s family and their community now have a plan to rebuild and they are successfully advocating for themselves to get the resources they need to see the plan through. Their future now includes not only homes, but also gardens to grow the food they need to feed themselves.

Development and Peace is sowing much love, not only in the Philippines, but in over 30 other countries!

You see, we always stay behind long after the headlines of disaster have disappeared from the news. It is our long-term view and our willingness to embrace the complexities of fighting poverty that makes us effective.

For almost 50 years, Canadian Catholics have opened their hearts to our sisters and brothers who live in poverty, and shown their generosity and their confidence in Development and Peace. I am asking you today to once again show that confidence and generosity. Please support the Share Lent campaign as we Sow Much Love today and into the future.

Thank you.
“Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.” With these words, Jesus alludes to his coming sacrifice as one that will also give new life.

My name is _______________. I am grateful for this opportunity to invite you to support our parish Share Lent campaign for Development and Peace. You can do this by offering your own sacrificial gift today. The great mystery of Christian life is that our sacrifices are not in vain, but rather lead to new life.

Development and Peace is honoured to support courageous women and men in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East who make sacrifices each and every day. We offer our support so that their families, loved ones and communities can live another day. Sometimes the sacrifice they make is their own life. Development and Peace partner Caritas works to restore peace in the Central African Republic, a country where civil strife has claimed many lives. Sadly, that includes the life of Father Christ Forman Wilibona, who was shot six times and killed on Good Friday last year. The Central African Republic is just one of more than 30 countries throughout the world where your gift to Development and Peace brings new life, and honours the ultimate sacrifice made by Father Wilibona and countless others.

Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain. While there has been progress in reducing hunger in the world, more than 800 million people still go without the daily food they need. The sacrifices we make here, today, on behalf of the poor will bear fruit through the work of Development and Peace partners.

Take, for example, the widows of Tacloban in the Philippines. In losing their husbands to the great typhoon, they found each other. With the help of our local partner, Urban Poor Associates, they formed the Yolanda Survivors’ Women’s Association. The first thing they did together was plant a communal garden to grow food for their children. By supporting each other, and thanks to your generous solidarity, they are no longer hungry.

Fighting hunger is not only a matter of helping after disasters but also getting to the root causes of the problem. Poor farmers should be able to support themselves and their communities through their own efforts on their own land. But many are lured away to work on large plantations for meagre wages. Too many find themselves working in slave-like conditions on plantations for literally nothing. Brazil’s Pastoral Land Commission, a long-term Development and Peace partner, helps people escape from forced labour on plantations and find land on which to earn their own livelihoods. Maria Dalva is one of those whose eyes were opened by the commission’s “Slavery No Way” campaign. She now helps others avoid the trap of slavery. “I am in love with the land,” she says, “I love to plant, nurture and harvest!” Maria helps form farming cooperatives so that people can access the land and resources they need to feed their families and communities. This is another good example of how your sacrifice bears fruit for those who need it most.
I invite you to read these and other stories in our Share Lent materials you will find here at the Church. (Hold up a copy of the Mini-magazine or other materials).

What is unique about Development and Peace, what makes us different from our secular counterparts, is the Gospel spirit that animates us. “If development were concerned with merely technical aspects of human life … then the Church would not be entitled to speak on it,” Benedict XVI says in Caritas in Veritate.

In today’s readings, the prophet Jeremiah says “I will place my law within them and write it upon their hearts.” Our approach to development is not found in textbooks but is written on our very hearts. It recognizes that people are not objects to be developed, but subjects who are called to take control of their own lives and their own development. The gifts of Canadian Catholics like yourselves – your sacrifices – allow that to happen. They allow us all to become not patrons of the poor, but their partners in the search for human dignity. In this way we can truly become, as Pope Francis calls us to be, a church that is both poor and for the poor.

Today, on Solidarity Sunday, Catholics across Canada are showing their solidarity with those in our human family who need it most. We do this by giving generously – sacrificially – to Development and Peace. Saint John Paul II called solidarity the “firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good … the good of all.” Our Lenten sacrifices, inspired by the sacrifice of our Lord, help bring about the common good in the world today.

I believe that we here today have “Sow Much Love… to Give.” (Hold up a copy of the campaign poster or a Mini-magazine here). On behalf of all those who benefit year after year from your generosity, and with whom we are all on a journey to a better world, thank you from the bottom of my heart.