The Lenten season is a time to come closer to God through prayer, fasting and almsgiving. As people of faith, we invite others in our parish, our schools and our community to join us in opening our hearts and to be in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in the Global South. We call on them to take action together to build a better world.

For the last 50 years, Canadian Catholics have faithfully responded to the cry of the poor by giving generously to Development and Peace – Caritas Canada. We have walked side by side with the women, men and children who experience the injustice of poverty, no matter where they may be.

In this Jubilee year, we have decided to put forward a theme that is dear to us, a theme that is both a source of hope and a catalyst for change. This Lent, Development and Peace will be joining its voice to that of Pope Francis, who in his video message of May 3rd, 2016, invited us to pray with him “that in all countries of the world, women may be honoured, respected and valued for their essential contribution to society.”

Together, let us take full advantage of the sacred moment that is Lent to create a space for dialogue that will allow us to contemplate a future of justice and dignity for all. A space to put forward the undeniable contribution of women who are at the heart of change and who, for the past 50 years, have been vital actors in Development and Peace’s programs.

The prayers, symbols, announcements, short talk and reflection provided in this guide are suggestions to help you bring this message of faith and love to your parish and/or your school.

We hope that these resources will inspire you, and that you will share the joy of the Gospel and the message of this important campaign with those around you.
KEY MOMENTS

February 1st
Order your materials by February 1st to ensure that you receive them in time for Ash Wednesday (March 1st).

First four weeks of Lent
+ Insert the campaign materials in your parish bulletin (Mini-magazine, Solidarity Calendar).
+ Publish weekly announcements in your parish bulletin or use them in school announcements.
+ Create a special display of Development and Peace materials.
+ Promote Share Year-Round at every possible opportunity. Visit our website at devp.org/shareyearround for more information.

Fourth Sunday of Lent
+ Prepare parishioners for next week’s collection by making the campaign visible.
+ Say a prayer or lead the Symbols of Solidarity.
+ Hold a special event during the week (you could, for example, show a Development and Peace video).

Fifth Sunday of Lent: Solidarity Sunday
+ A great day for the homily or short announcement to remind and motivate parishioners to give to the Share Lent collection. Be sure to thank them for their generosity!
+ Invite people to become Share Year-Round monthly donors, so that they can support our programs all year long.

Good Friday
+ Organize a Way of the Cross for your parish community and invite school communities to attend.

Thank-you announcement
+ Publish a thank-you note in your parish bulletin and announce the amount raised for the campaign.

For parish celebrations, it is important to work closely with the pastor and the liturgical committee to determine which suggestions in the liturgical resources will be possible to use at Mass. For school celebrations, consult the worship coordinator and the chaplain or pastoral worker to see which suggestions would work best.

Do not forget to check out our 50th anniversary resources! They are available throughout our jubilee year, until the fall of 2017. You can find them at: devp.org/50years.

Subscribe to our monthly e-Newsletter to receive news about the campaign and learn more about Development and Peace’s activities.
RESOURCES FOR THE WOMEN AT THE HEART OF CHANGE CAMPAIGN

Poster
The poster for this year’s Share Lent campaign also celebrates Development and Peace – Caritas Canada’s 50th anniversary. The photo selected is one of a woman vendor at the market in Kalebuka, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. There, we supported the construction of a modern, covered public market that meets health standards. It is a facility that enables women to sell their fresh products every day without having to walk dozens of kilometres.

Mini-magazine
The Mini-magazine is a central part of our Lenten campaign. It will enable you to present our partners and their programs through testimonials from participants. This year, we are presenting the stories of five strong and inspiring women from all over the world. Thanks to the support of Development and Peace, they have each in their own way been able to make their voices heard and helped lay the foundations for greater equality in their respective countries. Through their stories, we address issues of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, agriculture in Paraguay, armed conflict in Syria and participation of vulnerable women in Indonesian society. We will also present to you women who have inspired our organization throughout its history.

Way of the Cross
As part of the 50th anniversary Share Lent campaign, Development and Peace has chosen to offer you a Way of the Cross in which women hold a special place. Let us all open our hearts to the perspective of the women who accompanied Christ in his passion, and let us pray in solidarity with our sisters throughout the world for a world of justice and peace.

Solidarity Calendar
Intended for families with young children, the purpose of the Solidarity Calendar is to experience solidarity on a daily basis in your home throughout the Lenten period. For each day of Lent, our calendar proposes either an action, a prayer or a learning opportunity in connection with the theme of our campaign, Women at the Heart of Change.

Videos
This year, we are offering three short testimonial videos that show how Development and Peace partners in Indonesia, Paraguay and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are placing Women at the Heart of Change. Watch or download our videos via our website at devp.org/sharelent/videos.

Share Lent online
Discover our online resources at devp.org/sharelent/resources
- Read stories about our partners and projects in the Global South.
- View or download key resources, including materials, videos, logos, banners and other tools to promote the campaign.
- Consult an analysis of Women at the Heart of Change, which will be launched on International Women’s Day, March 8th, 2016.
- Go to devp.org/insp-women and send us a picture with a short text (2-3 sentences) about a woman that inspires you. We will publish it on our website.
You are invited to ask your parish if it would be willing to publish these announcements in its bulletin to promote Development and Peace – Caritas Canada’s 2017 Share Lent campaign. Ideally, the messages will be published for seven consecutive weeks starting on February 26th. You can also download these announcements in Word format at devp.org/sharelent/resources. The bulletin announcements contain references to the free materials that you can order and distribute during the appropriate week to promote the campaign.

February 26
Pre-lenten announcement
50 years of Share Lent!

On Ash Wednesday, Development and Peace – Caritas Canada will launch its 50th annual Share Lent campaign, entitled Women at the Heart of Change.

Since the Organization’s founding in 1967, money donated annually by Catholics during Share Lent provides essential support to the poorest populations of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. Today, Development and Peace supports 173 partners and 194 projects in 46 countries around the world!

You can make Share Lent a part of your family’s Lenten journey by using the Solidarity Calendar, which you can obtain in your parish today. This year, the Share Lent collection will take place on April 2nd, which is Solidarity Sunday. If you would like to lend a hand or find out more, please contact [name of local contact person for D&P] at [phone number – email].

Did you know that Development and Peace’s first Share Lent campaign took place in 1968 and raised $1.35 million, which was used to carry out projects in 32 countries?

Week 1 → March 5
Women keep the land in their hearts in Paraguay

Supporting women is a priority for Development and Peace – Caritas Canada. For this year’s Share Lent campaign, we invite you to listen to the voices of women who are working to build the world of tomorrow — Women at the heart of change. You will find testimonials from the four corners of the globe inside our Mini-magazine, distributed in church starting today. Don’t forget to get your copy!

Our first testimonial is from Marta and Silvia, two women from Paraguay who are members of an Indigenous women’s farming association supported by Development and Peace – Caritas Canada. “I wish that there was land for everyone, that women were free [and] that they had the freedom to organize and defend their rights,” Silvia tells us.

Women have always been at the heart of our organization! Did you know that in 1979, Development and Peace led a campaign to support the Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo, in Argentina, whose children and grandchildren disappeared under the military dictatorship?

Week 2 → March 12
Women are building an inclusive society in Indonesia

This week, Development and Peace – Caritas Canada is taking you to Indonesia to meet Risya, a 22-year-old Indonesian woman who has been blind since adolescence. Thanks to a workshop in journalism offered by our partner the Association of Independent Journalists (AJI), this courageous young woman started to use her blog to write about the discrimination faced by women with
disabilities and to encourage these women to believe in their potential. AJI has offered media workshops to 170 women and now they can make their voices heard!

Remember! In 2004, a tsunami hit the coastlines around the Indian Ocean, resulting in 300,000 victims. In collaboration with its partners, Development and Peace provided emergency relief, completed the construction of 3,500 permanent homes and related infrastructure, and helped establish 26 community organizations.

**Week 3 > March 19**

Women are breaking the chains of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

This week, we meet with Cécile Kazadi, a woman from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who explains why community radio is an essential tool for women denouncing sexual violence. “Thanks to RCK radio, our lives have changed a lot. We are now aware of our rights.”

This year, why not share year-round by joining Development and Peace – Caritas Canada’s monthly donor program? More information can be found online at devp.org/shareyearround.

Development and Peace has been working with the Congolese Catholic Church to encourage citizen participation and ensure a fair electoral process since the first democratic elections in the DRC in 2006.

This year, why not share year-round by joining Development and Peace – Caritas Canada’s monthly donor program? More information can be found online at devp.org/shareyearround.

**Week 4 > March 26**

Women are creating a future filled with hope in Syria

This week, open your heart to the reality of women living in a country at war. Listen to the voice of Hannan, a Syrian woman who tells us how our partner’s training centres are helping to change the female workforce and the financial autonomy of women in her region. “Through the training course, I personally evolved a lot as a person.

Today, I dream of teaching sewing and running a learning centre.” Thanks to your support during Share Lent this year, 280 Syrians will have access to an 11-week training course in sewing and psychosocial services!

Next week is Solidarity Sunday and the Share Lent collection will take place. Please, be generous!

Did you know that in 1982, Development and Peace – Caritas Canada launched its first three-year mobilization and education campaign, entitled “Militarization: Obstacle to Development”? Under the leadership of Kenneth L. Green, it was based on the following premises:

- The process of militarization is the result of the choices of those in power, who are able to control the means of production and to make collective decisions.
- The armed forces are a hotbed of militarization.
- The development of the country and peace are incompatible with the creation of a military-industrial complex.
- Development cannot be achieved without peace.

**Week 5 > April 2**

Solidarity Sunday!

Thank you for your generosity! Each donation is used to help our sisters and brothers all over the world — from Paraguay to Syria, to Indonesia and beyond! We conclude this Share Lent with the words of Pope Francis, offered on the occasion of the Jubilee of Mercy: “Mercy is the force that reawakens us to new life and instils in us the courage to look to the future with hope.” Thank you for helping us create a future filled with hope!

Did you know that in 1992, Rigoberta Menchú, a friend of Development and Peace – Caritas Canada, received the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of her work defending the rights of Indigenous peoples? To learn more about this inspiring woman, visit devp.org/insp-women#rigoberta.

**April 9**

(or once the fundraising results are known)

Thank you for your support to the 2017 Share Lent campaign!

Development and Peace – Caritas Canada thanks everyone who donated to Share Lent. Thanks to your generosity, [\$ amount] was collected in our parish. This sum will go towards meeting the needs of our sisters and brothers in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. If you have not had a chance to make a donation, there is still time to place your Share Lent envelope in the Offertory or to make a donation directly at devp.org/give. Thank you for continuing to pray for all those who are working to build a world of peace and justice.
SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL
FOR EACH SUNDAY OF LENT

In his video message of May 3rd, 2016, Pope Francis invited us to pray with him so that “in all countries of the world women may be honoured, respected and valued for their essential contribution to society.” In view of this, and as part of our Lenten campaign, Development and Peace – Caritas Canada recommends that you add one or two of the Pope’s prayer intentions to the suggestions for the prayers of the faithful for each Sunday of Lent.

That the undeniable contribution of women in all areas of human activity be recognized and valued, we pray to the Lord.

God of the Universe, hear our prayer.

That the sexual violence against women and girls here and elsewhere be condemned, we pray to the Lord.

God of the Universe, hear our prayer.

That the obstacles that prevent women’s full integration into social, political, and economic life be eliminated, we pray to the Lord.

God of the Universe, hear our prayer.

That women of every nation and culture be honoured and respected, we pray to the Lord.

God of the Universe, hear our prayer.

That women and men learn to work together, in equal partnership, each valuing the gifts of the other, we pray to the Lord.

God of the Universe, hear our prayer.

We pray for the girls and women of Afghanistan

That the fundamental rights of Afghan girls and women, especially their right to receive an education, be respected, we pray to the Lord.

God of the Universe, hear our prayer.

We pray for the girls and women of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

That the girls and women of the Democratic Republic of the Congo cease to be victims of the scourge of sexual violence that is ravaging their country, we pray to the Lord.

God of the Universe, hear our prayer.

We pray for Indigenous girls and women here at home and elsewhere

That the rights of Indigenous girls and women here and elsewhere be respected, and that all forms of violence against them cease, we pray to the Lord.

God of the Universe, hear our prayer.

We pray for the advent of an egalitarian world

The political bodies and civil society organizations work toward building an equal and just world, we pray to the Lord.

God of the Universe, hear our prayer.

We pray for recognition of the role of women in our Church

That the faithful listen attentively to the voice of women in the great decision-making moments in the life of the Church, we pray to the Lord.

God of the Universe, hear our prayer.

We pray for the members of our community

That our local communities work in solidarity to improve the living conditions of women here and elsewhere, we pray to the Lord.

God of the Universe, hear our prayer.
Hello, my name is _____________. I’m grateful for this opportunity to talk to you about Development and Peace – Caritas Canada’s Share Lent Campaign *Women at the Heart of Change*.

This is a very special year. It marks the 50th anniversary of Development and Peace! Yes, for 50 years, Catholics in Canada have been reaching out to our sisters and brothers around the world through Development and Peace and its annual Share Lent appeal. Together, we have been on a journey to seek a world free from poverty, violence and oppression – a world full of the peace of God.

In those 50 years, the generosity of the faithful has meant that over 600 million dollars have been invested in more than 15,000 projects in over 100 countries! Some of that investment has even contributed to the work of Nobel Peace Prize winners! Rigoberta Menchú, for instance, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992, received support from Development and Peace in her efforts to defend and advance the rights of Indigenous peoples in her country, Guatemala.

Rigoberta is just one of many thousands of women who have been able to work for their own development and the development of their families, communities and countries thanks to the solidarity of people like you. If we look closely at success stories of overcoming poverty in our history, we often find “Women at the Heart of Change.”

Let me give you an example that touched me.

**[Choose one of the examples below]**

Ismène Elismar Garçonnet is at the heart of change in her community. This mother of three in Haiti was one of the chief engineers on a project led by our partner ITECA to build new houses after the 2010 earthquake. Thanks to the project, Ismène was trained in how to make reinforced masonry and other skills. The project employed 600 workers and tradespeople, and 800 houses were built. When Hurricane Matthew hit Haiti in October 2016, only one home was damaged by the 200 km/hr winds! Yes, together we are building back better and stronger! I encourage you to read more about the work of Development and Peace by taking some of the materials [indicate where to find the materials].

Cécile Kazadi is at the heart of change in her village of Mbalaka, in the southern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. For two decades now, this country has been torn apart by a war that is marked by systematic acts of sexual violence committed against girls and women. Development and Peace has been supporting community radio networks in six provinces. They provide, amongst other things, information to women on their rights and legal recourse in the case of rape or sexual violence. When the daughter of Cécile was raped, she went to the radio station where they helped her bring the case to justice. Her daughter’s aggressor was then imprisoned. The story of Cécile and her daughter shows the power of information and education. Yes, together we are building a better world! I encourage you to read more about the work of Development and Peace by taking some of the materials [indicate where to find the materials].

On behalf of [name of the woman you chose from the examples above] and all of those who count on our financial support, I would like to end by saying thank you. Thank you for being generous today and for helping to ensure that our parish, *(parish name here)*, will be there to be part of the journey ahead for the next 50 years. It is the journey of love, compassion and solidarity that Christ has entrusted to all of us – it is the journey towards a fair world for all.

THANK YOU!
The Symbols of Solidarity is an optional activity aimed at bringing to life our campaign’s theme and main message. The symbols can be used in a procession before or during Mass, or at any other gathering. If you plan on using the Symbols of Solidarity during Mass, it is important that you first consult with the pastor to see if it meets diocesan liturgical directives as well as the approved liturgical practice of your parish. Schools can also consider displaying these symbols throughout Lent in the chapel or another appropriate place.

The procession of each symbol starts when the narrator begins to read the section for that symbol, and it ends at the front of the church or room, or whichever location the pastor has judged best. You may wish to have just one narrator or different voices for each part. Allow brief pauses between symbols for reflection. The entire procession generally takes between 10 and 15 minutes, but can be shortened (or lengthened) in order to suit your parish’s particular needs. Those who carry the symbols should remain at the front of the church or room so that all participants can join hands after the presentation of the last symbol. It is suggested that, given this year’s campaign theme, women and girls be given these roles.

You will need:
- A place to put the symbols after they are carried in – perhaps close to the sanctuary, on a table decorated for this purpose, or a special area in the room where the procession will take place.
- A water jug to symbolize the way that women provide the necessities of life for their families.
- A branch or a potted plant to symbolize women activists.
- A hardhat to represent women labourers and tradespeople.
- A ballot, representing women voters and women politicians.

Script for narrator
In May 2016, Pope Francis asked us to pray so “that in all countries of the world, women may be honoured, respected and valued for their essential contribution to society.” He reminded us that greater participation by women is needed in order to build more sustainable economies and healthier societies. Since 1967, with your support, Development and Peace – Caritas Canada has been working to ensure that women are involved in finding sustainable solutions to the challenges of poverty and inequality, and to the recovery of communities hit hard by conflicts and disasters.

Today, we offer to you symbols that represent the many roles that women play in the development of their communities and countries. Women are at the heart of change. May we hear their voices and may their message of hope and love open our hearts to compassion for our sisters.
1st symbol
A water jug
Women throughout the world are relied on by their families to provide the necessities of life. This water jug symbolizes the 40 billion hours that women and girls in sub-Saharan Africa spend each year collecting water so their families’ needs can be met. Development and Peace works to make water more accessible to communities and life easier for the women and girls who are tasked with fetching it. In northeastern Somalia in the Horn of Africa, Development and Peace has provided funding so communities can build covers for rainwater storage tanks. This prevents evaporation and contamination of this precious resource. Thirty-five thousand people have improved access to fresh water because of this project.

2nd symbol
A branch or a plotted plant
This branch (or plant) has been brought here to put us in communion with Berta Cáceres, an Indigenous leader, mother, midwife and environmental activist from Honduras. Berta, a friend of Development and Peace, led a struggle to stop the building of four hydro-electric dams that would have destroyed a river her people rely on—a project in which they were given no say. A year ago, in March 2016, Berta was murdered in her home by armed men believed to be connected to the military and the company building the dams. We remember Berta and other women activists like her, who work for the cause of social justice, often in the face of threats to their lives.

3rd symbol
A hardhat
This hardhat represents the many women who play roles in the construction of their communities. In the Philippines, women like Marlyn Saoy are at the forefront of the Pope Francis Village, a Development and Peace reconstruction project that is helping communities build a new village after theirs were destroyed by Typhoon Haiyan. Marlyn is taking part in the construction of the village. She also plans budgets, purchases supplies and meets with government officials. Thanks to the project, Marlyn has been able to take training courses where she has furthered her knowledge of construction and gained confidence in her abilities.

4th symbol
A ballot
This ballot represents the power women have in the political arena as voters, candidates and elected officials. Women are playing a greater role in politics and in voting for the politicians that will best serve their communities. Many of our partners, like the National Episcopal Conference of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), have instituted programs that educate citizens on their rights and responsibilities as voters and encourage full participation, particularly of women and youth. Development and Peace has been working with the national Church to ensure a fair electoral process and to encourage citizen participation since the first free elections in the DRC in 2006.

Concluding prayer
(The celebrant can be asked to pray these words.)

Let us pray
Loving God,
We place these Symbols of Solidarity before you.
We offer them in gratitude for, and as a reminder of, the many roles women play in our community and in communities around the world.
Help us to always value the gifts of women in our world.
May we never forget that women are pillars of society and the bedrock of our families.
This we pray in Jesus’ name.
Amen.
THE TRUE BEAUTY OF COMPLEMENTARITY:
PUTTING WOMEN AT THE HEART OF THE ACTION

A faith-based reflection on Women at the Heart of Change.

“Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. And also pull out some from the bundles for her and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her.” (Ruth 2:5-16)

Around the globe, every day, there are women and men who work together to transform their lives and the lives of their communities. They steward the natural world around them and advocate for a fairer, more just world. Many women, like Risya Syair, use their talents to change the perception of women in society. Others, like Hanan Halima, are entrepreneurial and create activities that support low-income families. Recognizing these efforts, and allowing these women to “glean” is part of our call as Christians to journey toward justice.

This call, as we see in the book of Ruth, is the promise of God. God, the provider to the orphan, the widow, the stranger and all the poor (Deut. 10:18, Psalm 146:9), turns His gaze to women who are oppressed and shines His light upon them.

If we also turn our gaze in this way, we can see the challenges that women face around the world. In Afghanistan, only 18% of adult women are able to read and write, compared to 45% of adult males. Eighty-seven percent of women confess to experiencing domestic violence. The United Nations and the World Health Organization report that women aged 15-44 around the world are more at risk from violence than from cancer, and up to 70% of women experience violence in their lifetime. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a country where women are the target of systematic sexual assaults, we are witnessing a normalization of sexual violence. Thus, an estimated 48 women are raped per hour. Such horrifying statistics call us to pause.

If we take even the briefest of moments to imagine the human faces behind these numbers, we cannot help but be moved. A simple tear from us may betray what we feel inside, for their pain is surely held in our own hearts. Indeed, compassion should be at the root of every loving and Christian response to not only suffering, but to what we may properly call horror.

Resisting against such sexual and gender-based violence is often hampered by impunity, when the rule of law is either unknown or ignored. Judicial and social constructs often further demonize the victims of such systemic violence and promote the practice of “victim blaming.” In contrast, we have the example of our Lord who defends the adulteress against the violence of the law itself (John 8:1-11). We must, like Jesus, courageously put love and mercy first and stand with victims. We must give them a voice and a place at the table instead of shaming them into silence and invisibility.

Additionally, there are many parts of the world in which women are denied economic opportunities, and barred from participating as equal partners in the building and transformation of their communities. Women have less access to banking services, a gap that is largest in countries in the Global South.

Development and Peace – Caritas Canada is working with partners around the world to transform these situations and address the root causes of such injustice. Inspired by Gospel values and strong in the knowledge that all persons have God-given dignity, we support women and men, but especially women in their search for social and economic justice.

We do this because we are moved, and challenged to do so by our faith. In Octogesima Adveniens, Pope Paul VI writes that efforts should be “directed to protecting her [the woman’s] proper vocation, and at the same time recognizing her independence as a person, and her equal rights to participate in cultural, economic, social and political life.”

This recognition of equal participation is a standard of Catholic faith, and is uniquely tied to our teaching on complementarity, which refers to the unique and fruitful...
relationship between women and men. Both are created in the image of God and both have great dignity and worth. They are not the same, but bring their unique and complementary gifts to their communities. As such, there are no ascribed and rigid gender roles, but rather an understanding that the recognition and equal participation of both women and men in cultural, social, economic and political life helps us journey towards a fairer world. As Pope Emeritus Benedict noted on January 19, 2013 during his address to the Pontifical Council, the “reciprocity between male and female is an expression of the beauty of nature as willed by the Creator.” From this teaching, we can and must move beyond the simple framework of individual marriages, and see within it the context of our global communities so that we move towards the moral conversion so strongly called for in *Laudato Si’*.

We must understand this in a radical way. The true beauty of the teaching on complementarity is not the justification of unequal power relationships between men and women, but realizing their equal partnership. As Pope Francis noted to the bishops of Puerto Rico, “such differences are not for opposition or subordination, but for communion and generation, always in the image and likeness of God.” Such a teaching, which celebrates and uplifts both man and woman, defies those who try to subjugate women or who find ways to physically, psychologically and economically harm them. Such offenses are inconsistent with the notion of having “equal personal dignity.”

In this way, we are not only thinking of women, but also of men. When we call men to integrity, and when women and men work together to establish strong economic and social communities, we also work towards resisting the social structures that oppress us all.

Christ, in “making all things new,” proclaimed a new humanity. Christ is proclaimed as a new Adam, but also cannot forget that Mary is proclaimed as the new Eve. Her ‘yes’ makes her a participant in the great divine plan of salvation, uttering a yes in the name of all human nature. Is it not remarkable that God put the destiny of all humankind in a young woman’s hands?

This new humanity is found in the complementarity of women and men working together, and by doing so, resisting the logic of domination and profit that pits men against women, parents against their children, class against class, and race against race. We do not walk towards a kind of glib universalism where our differences and unique talents disappear into sameness. We walk together in solidarity and in a crowd of voices that insist on reform and dialogue, and that speak prophetically against social injustice.

The equal recognition of both women and men becomes a tool for liberation. This is because the task requires the leadership of women, their unique talents and their ability to empower other women. Part of these unique talents is the understanding of injustice that women bring with them from their very own lived experiences.

What does it really mean to put the lives of women at the heart of the action? It means recognizing them in their God-given dignity as equal and unique partners alongside men. Putting women at the heart of the action engenders the real fruit of liberation, and underscores the Good News of salvation. Just like Mary, may we treasure that Good News and ponder it in our hearts.
50 YEARS OF SOLIDARITY

Loving God,
You who created everything that is good;
You who stretch out the heavens like a tent.
You have made us for each other. You call us from our isolation into one community of love.
Your voice is sure and strong.
We come from many places and yet we are woven together in Your Spirit.
Together, we hear the cry of the poor, bearing the weight of injustice.
Together, we see the pain of the Earth as her beauty is destroyed.
And together, we hear your voice most clearly:
Calling us to join in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in need;
Calling us to commit ourselves, as Ruth to Naomi saying, “Where you go, I will go. Where you stay, I will stay.”
O Lord, stretch the canvas of our hearts that we might make room for the suffering of all humanity, and of all creation.
Today, by your grace, we join our lives to those who labour in the fields – those who are weighed down by injustice and those who work to build the world according to your way.
Lead us in the way of discipleship – the way of love, of faith, of justice, and of peace – the way that has always been yours.
Amen.