

## SHORT TALK

By now, we've all seen them. Heart-rending videos of the Amazon on fire. And we've heard debates about whether and how much climate change is to blame. Behind those inflamed images and arguments lies a sobering reality — the Amazon and its peoples are under threat. Deforestation in the Amazon is speeding up alarmingly.

And at least indirectly, we are responsible. In this Lenten period, when Catholics are called to sacrifice and penance, it behooves us to reflect on this responsibility.

Our consumerism drives illegal logging, industrial agriculture and livestock farming. And then there are the massive energy and mining projects, in some of which Canadian companies and pension funds have important stakes.

These commercial activities need land. Land that is forested. Land that houses Indigenous and traditional peoples. They live off it sustainably and nurture it. But they stand in the way of those who want to profit off nature.

So, they are driven off. Brutally. Through criminalization. Through divisive politics. And even through murder. Things are especially dire in Brazil, where the government is withdrawing protections from Indigenous and traditional peoples and their lands.

As Catholics, we are called by our Church to share her deep concern about this situation. Pope Francis addressed this concern in his 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si'*. Then, he convened the Pan-Amazonian Synod "for the cause of the crisis of the Amazonian forest, lung of fundamental importance for our planet."

Development and Peace's *For our Common Home* campaign responds to the call to ecological conversion that animated the encyclical and the Synod. It calls us to express solidarity with two Brazilian communities whose lands and ways of life are threatened by mining, illegal logging, ranching and industrial agriculture.

Our Share Lent appeal recognizes that this solidarity alone is not enough. The larger cause is building a world of justice and peace in Amazonia and beyond. It means helping the voiceless and the oppressed rise and defend their dignity. Your generosity supports not only the people of the Amazon but also the hundreds of thousands of people who benefitted from 149 Development and Peace projects last year in 36 countries across the world.

To give generously to the Share Lent appeal is to nurture the Lenten spirit that prepares us to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. Pope Francis reminds us to "see in the sharing of our possessions a tangible witness of the communion that is ours in the Church!"<sup>1</sup> Thank-you for sharing with our sisters and brothers in our global family through Development and Peace!

<sup>1</sup> Excerpted from the "Message of the Holy Father Francis for Lent 2018."