



ALBERTA MACKENZIE PROVINCIAL CWL COUNCIL COMMUNITY LIFE

OCTOBER 2013 - COMMUNIQUE #1

*Dear Lord, make me appreciative of the dignity
of my standing committee and its many responsibilities.
Never permit me to disgrace it by giving way to coldness,
unkindness or impatience.
Please bear with my faults, looking only to my intention,
which is to serve you in the person of each member
of the Catholic Women's League.
Increase my faith, bless my efforts and work
for God and Canada. Amen.*

Under the Community Life standing committee, the chairperson shall deal with the dignity and rights of persons, social and economic justice, immigration, refugees and citizenship, Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace (CCODP) and developing countries.

Development and Peace

The name of the organization is the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace. It is a democratic movement for international solidarity incorporated under Part II of the Canada Corporation Act by letters patent dated October 20, 1967. This organization is inspired by the values of the Gospel, particularly the preferential option for the poor. Its objectives are to promote international solidarity through an education program in Canada and through financial support of socio-economic projects in developing countries. By virtue of its mandate, the Organization collaborates with the Bishops of Canada in order to engage the entire community in actions for international solidarity. In the pursuit of its objectives within each Diocese and Eparchy, the Organization works in close harmony with each Bishop.

2013 Education Campaign/A Voice for Justice

Development and Peace has collected testimonials from communities in Honduras, Madagascar, Peru and the Philippines, who have all asked that we tell you their stories. They want you to know that the profits earned from mining are not leading to long-term development for communities. In fact, in many instances, people are experiencing serious social problems and injustices such as displacements of their homes, erosion of their agricultural land, deforestation, pollution of their water sources, violence, conflict and corruption of local officials. They have been told and promised that schools would be built, better housing

conditions, land for their crops, and this has not come true. The big companies that enter the land have no idea of how they are displacing these people. Canada is a big player in the world when it comes to mining and we, as Canadians, have a particular responsibility to hold companies and our government to account for the impact of this industry on the lives of people who may not always have the opportunity to represent their own interests. Let us open our minds and hearts to the voices of those who may not be with us in person, but who are with us in spirit, as part of our human family, and part of the body of Christ. Let us remember that *The Lord hears the cry of the poor* (Psalm 34:17) and resolve to listen carefully and to respond to those cries with faith and with hope as one body in Christ.

For the 2013 Fall Campaign, materials and information may be ordered online at www.devp.org/campaign. For this campaign to be as effective as possible, encourage your parish to form a small group to meet with your Member of Parliament during *Meet Your MP Week* in November 2013. Ask your MP to call for the creation of an independent ombudsman for the extractive sector.

HOMELESS PEOPLE

Estimating the number of homeless persons in Canada has been a source of debate for years. Until recently, there has never been a concerted, coordinated or consistent effort to enumerate homelessness in Alberta and Canada. This means that in the past we have relied on ball park estimates, based on unreliable and incomplete data. At least 200,000 Canadians experience homelessness in a given year. The number is potentially much higher, given that many people who become homeless live with friends or relatives, and do not come into contact with emergency shelters. At least 30,000 are homeless on a given night in Canada. Just watching and listening to the news in the City of Edmonton, homelessness has dropped due to housing being provided for these people.

We do know that the homelessness crisis was created through drastically reduced investments in affordable and social housing in the 1990's, shifts in income supports and the declining spending power of almost half of the population since that time. Currently many Albertans are at risk of homelessness because of the high cost (unavailability) of housing, inadequate incomes and family violence. The good news is that if we understand the causes of homelessness, we can do something about it.

I would like to ask each standing committee chairperson in your diocese to look into these matters and for more information, please go to the websites.

Gladys B.

Community Life Standing Committee Chairperson
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial CWL Council