

SERVING OUT OF LOVE

CARITAS IDENTITY AND MISSION



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INTRODUCTION

Luis Antonio G. Cardinal Tagle

This booklet on Caritas identity and mission is more than an information brochure from which one draws raw data about an organisation. It is a story book that invites the reader to join the characters on a pilgrimage. It is a door that welcomes everyone to the heart, mind, soul, hands and feet of a living body.

Caritas. Love. St. John proclaims, “God is love” (1 John 4:16). We tremble with joy and fear at the calling to manifest God to a world constantly thirsting for love. We are equally blessed to see God in the poor and the least of the world. That is how to be Caritas.

God who is love has a design to save and liberate the world, humanity and history from evil and death, leading all to fullness of life. God fulfilled this plan in the mission of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. We humbly but eagerly participate in God’s continuing mission. We are blessed to learn about life from the poor we serve. That is how to be Caritas.

God’s inner life is a communion of love. God’s mission is an act of communion of the three Divine Persons. The meeting of mission and communion generates the community of the Church which exists to evangelise through word, sacrament and charity/caritas. In the heart of the Church we serve together, guided by the values of solidarity, sharing, co-responsibility, participation, respect and common purpose. That is how to be Caritas.

Come, walk with us on the joyful path of love and service!

“Caritas is the caress of the Church to its people, the caress of the Mother Church to her children, her tenderness and closeness.”

Pope Francis



Caritas President Tagle with earthquake survivors in Nepal. Shahid Khan/Trócaire

“We are more than ever aware that the exercise of charity is a constitutive dimension of evangelisation and of the need to convert ourselves and to convert the entire ecclesial community to the service of the poor.”

African bishops, Kinshasa Declaration, Nov. 2012

Caritas member organisations fulfill their mission by reaching out to men and women, children, youth and elders of all races and creeds, in particular the poor and marginalised; providing social services, saving lives, rebuilding and empowering communities, working for justice and integral human promotion. A task that mobilises Church leaders at all levels, parish groups including the poor themselves, volunteers and professionals, in collaboration with other civil society actors, public institutions and international institutions.



Volunteers Heart Manoa Parish in Philadelphia. CCUSA

CARITAS IDENTITY IN ACTION

1. AT THE HEART OF PARISH LIFE

“The service of charity is (...) also a constitutive element of the Church’s mission and an indispensable expression of her very being”.

*Pope Benedict XVI,
Introduction of the “Motu Proprio Intima Ecclesiae Natura”*

AFRICA - DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

“My personal experience of Caritas work in Africa dates back to the time when I was a young boy in my village, more than 50 years ago,” explains Marc. “I used to see my mother with other women of our small Christian community working together, putting money aside to help those in need, organising prayers and masses for the

sick, contributing towards medical bills for those facing difficulties, providing family shelter to children whose parents were dead, cultivating the fields of those who were sick to prevent them from food shortage and hunger, sending contributions to the parish to support welfare initiatives at diocesan and even national levels, etc. Adult males and the youth did the same. We were not rich, but we helped each other, we were united. We shared the little that we had imitating the gestures of the early Christians mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles.”

NORTH AMERICA - USA

The CRS team (Caritas) of SS. Robert and William Parish in the Diocese of Cleveland, Ohio designed a programme during which each Monday in Lent students spent part of their lunch hour listening to stories of their brothers and sisters around the world, praying for them and writing reflections on what it means to give alms through Catholic Relief Services Lenten programme called CRS Rice Bowl. Through the programme, the parish school raised ten times more funds for CRS than they did during the prior year. Reflecting on the experience, Linda Shenk, one of the Caritas team members said, *“It is heart-warming to be so involved on the parish level with the work of CRS and to feel that we are making a difference in the lives of our brothers and sisters in so many countries. We are truly following Jesus’ call.”*

EUROPE - SERBIA

Caritas parish offices in Serbia have pioneered support and positive change for people with mental health difficulties. Serbian society has strong prejudices and Caritas works hard to overcome it. In Western Serbia, Caritas Šabac opened the Sveta Sofija day centre for adults, which improves their quality of life by developing their social, physical and psychological wellbeing. It helps them live independently. As occupational therapy, workshops were established to make chocolates and jam for sale, which also raise funds. Nearby Caritas Valjevo has a unique home-care service, set up in collaboration with local psychiatric staff. Together, they look after the social and mental needs of the people we serve in their homes, which reduces stays in hospital and debilitating institutionalisation.

BASIC ECCLESIAL COMMUNITIES IN THE PHILIPPINES

Since 1992, the Basic Ecclesial Communities (BEC) have become a strong foundation for living solidarity in the day to-day-life.

In one of the suburbs of Manila, the parish priest told us: *“Basic Ecclesial Communities life is at the intersection of faith, social concern and sharing, leading the members to live as a loving and caring community”*. On the bank of the Pasig river, the 2010 floods totally washed away the homes of the people. The parish priest along with Caritas staff decided to organise the affected community into a resilient community of solidarity.

Around 60 families were organised and were accompanied. They would come together, after the Sunday Mass, to pray and share their sufferings and aspirations to live in dignity. They were initiated in to different kinds of small income generating activities, such as fish breeding, small businesses. Also, they would take up various activities of common interest, such as sanitation and rebuilding houses for the most needy. They would engage in savings, in order to help the most vulnerable. Since 2013, they started to plant mangroves on the bank of the Pasig river in order to prevent soil erosion and consequently flooding of their homes. *“We have discovered that our poverty is not a fatality and that together and sustained with our faith, we can improve our life conditions and give a future to our children”*, says Marie Angel.

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Women empowerment Somalia. Amunga Eshuchi/Trocaire

2. ORGANISED TO DELIVER SOCIAL SERVICES AND EMPOWER COMMUNITIES

**“Love thus needs to be organised
if it is to be an ordered service to the community”**

Pope Benedict XVI, Deus Caritas Est n.20

GERMANY

Caritas has more than 25 000 centres and institutions in Germany where people can get professional support and guidance to help them cope with and overcome their problems.

These services are intended for all people who are socially disadvantaged, regardless of skin colour, religion or nationality.

People who are unemployed, have AIDS, have a substance addiction, are homeless, in prison, or mentally ill, or people who have immigrated from other countries ...all utilise the services Caritas offers in day centres and part-residential and residential care centres. These services are also utilised by families, children, young adults, people with disabilities, and the elderly. In all, Caritas Germany helps roughly 11 million people every year.

In its nursing homes, play schools, day nurseries, hospitals, health clinics and health and advice centres, people receive the advice, care, assistance and counsel they need. They come to the youth and disability centres, women's shelters as well as to Caritas advice centres for families, women, people in debt, addicts and immigrants to get support and guidance. More and more people living under the poverty level are also coming to Caritas' soup kitchens for food and 'clothes closets' for clothing.

These services are usually provided by local Caritas associations or the organisations running local charity facilities and are primarily funded by local and state governments and the Church. Many of the services are dependent on the donations of material goods, money or other contributions.

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PRISONERS IN CAMBODIA

There is a prison in Siem Reap, Cambodia and here thousand of prisoners often young, are locked and live in highly inhuman conditions. Caritas Cambodia has negotiated with the local authorities and the ministries to visit the prison, give the prisoners lessons in different areas and also accompany them in collective work such as agriculture and carpentry. The aim is to give them a meaning in life, through expression of concern, show that they are loved and through the different activities help them to live their humanity even when being in the prison. Bernadette who visits the prison says: *"These moments of encounter with the prisoners are moments of inner conversion for them and for us"*.

HIV/HEALTHCARE

Back in 2015, Caritas celebrated the milestone announcement by UNAIDS that 15 million people were now taking anti-retroviral medicine. These effective drugs - together with timely diagnosis - mean that people are living with HIV rather than dying from it. It's a goal Caritas advocated hard for and pursued within communities.

Caritas recently furthered its aims by holding a joint conference to strengthen the work of faith-based organisations, setting out a roadmap to further combat HIV/AIDS.

Colleagues from St Philip's Mission in Swaziland shared their best practices at the conference. They care for people with TB as well as those with HIV, as co-infection can be overlooked.

In Vietnam, Caritas supports the pioneering Mai Tam House of Hope in Ho Chi Minh City. The House of Hope accommodates adolescents with HIV while they acquire better skills for adulthood. Mai Tam helps them gain places in schools where they would previously have been excluded and offers help with medication.

In the diocese of Hai Phòng - Vietnam's third largest city - Caritas runs HIV prevention courses for young couples, starts patients on medical treatment and secures school bursaries to orphans or the children of sick parents.

WOMEN AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

Caritas understands the importance of economic empowerment for all poor and marginalised people. Within this, Caritas also works towards the future by empowering our next generation - our youth - and towards harnessing the often under-utilised strength of women by promoting their economic empowerment.

Caritas Mauritius offers training to women at its House Service Technician's School in the district of Black River. Now celebrating its 10th anniversary, the school has trained over 250 women, most of whom are now in work.

In Ethiopia, Caritas Belgium and the European Union support a Caritas Ethiopia project that trains women in livestock breeding and business skills. In the region of Wolayta, women are given cattle to establish a herd and are enrolled in a savings group. Once they have calves to sell, the women learn to diversify their assets into cows for milk production and small trading ventures. Alongside realising their economic worth, the women have also strengthened their resilience to drought as they have alternative income sources.

INCOME GENERATION

Accessing fair paid work or the means to generate an income has become increasingly difficult for the world's poorest people. Without money coming in regularly, they lose their confidence and dignity, as well as the ability to escape from poverty.

In Myanmar, 100 000 people have been displaced by conflict between the government and rebels in the Kachin region. Caritas Myanmar helps 16 000 of them in government and rebel areas.

At the St. Joseph Maina Camp in Myitkyina, a livelihood recovery project trains women in weaving and gives them the business skills needed to generate income from their work. Money for the project is tight though, and more women would like to learn than there are spaces on the training courses and looms to practice on.

Thein Thein Khein fled here four years ago and works as the camp focal point, making sure that the needs of the displaced are

voiced, heard and acted upon. But she hopes to learn to weave and to market her goods, and one day set up a business and live a peaceful, independent life.

In the Comoros, 36 percent of women have never been to school and have very limited opportunities to generate an income. Caritas Comoros runs self-help centres, which train hundreds of women in literacy and tailoring. Catering, management and building rehabilitation courses are now being offered, as well as start-up kits and financial back-up from Caritas upon graduation.

MICRO-CREDIT

Access to small loans can be lifechanging for the world's poorest people. Caritas projects offer this financial lifeline to those struck by natural disasters or whose everyday life can never improve without help.

In Senegal, Caritas works with women from the countryside who migrate to the capital, Dakar, in search of a better life. When they find themselves exploited by employers and landlords, many want to return home. But they need money and new skills. A Caritas micro-credit project helps them to set up small businesses to become financially independent. Many women find success as market traders or vegetable farmers or learn to sew.

Other Caritas projects respond to people who already have the ideas – but not the finances – to improve their lives. In Angola's Uige province, many of the women supported are keen to work together as informal custodians of their shared financial resources. They take turns to be the "Mama Kixiquila" who can borrow from a pot of money they have each contributed to. This allows them to start or support a small business. Without an initial boost from Caritas their ideas would not become realities.

In northern Ecuador people needed access to micro-credit after an earthquake decimated their communities. Caritas Ecuador offered support to help families start garden plots to rebuild their finances and cover rebuilding expenses.



Rohingya Refugee crisis, Bangladesh December 2017

3. RESPONDING COLLECTIVELY TO DISASTER, SAVING LIVES, REBUILDING COMMUNITIES

**“The kerygma has a clear social content:
at the very heart of the Gospel is life in community
and engagement with others.
The content of the first proclamation has
an immediate moral implication centred on charity”**

Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, 177.

IRAN, BAM

On 26 December, 2003, a major earthquake registering 6.5 on the Richter scale devastated the Bam district, killing 26 000 people, leaving 30 000 injured and 80 000 homeless. Most severely hit was the city of Bam located in Kerman province in the south-eastern part of the country and its 92 000 inhabitants.

The Caritas network in close collaboration with Caritas Iran went into action, and helped the people, predominantly Muslims, victims of this disaster. With a group of Christian volunteers, Caritas did whatever it could to bring them basic needs.



Caritas Rwanda's volunteer group is made up of Burundians living in the camp.
Alan Whelan/Trócaire.

This selfless giving and expression of love touched the survivors who were eager to know how the Church can render selfless service to the non Christians. "This was a beautiful and intense moment of witnessing" said the only religious who was serving Caritas.

SOUTH SUDAN REFUGEES IN UGANDA

"It was the most effective response I have seen in my 22 years at Caritas." This is how Msgr. Francis Ndamira, the national director of Caritas Uganda, described the delivery of humanitarian relief to thousands of refugees who had fled violence in South Sudan. He put the efficiency and speed down to new measures streamlining rapid response, which have been devised and implemented by Caritas Internationalis.

The village of Bidi Bidi near Uganda's border with South Sudan had been an outpost with a few family homesteads. But within weeks it turned into the world's second largest refugee camp, housing 220 000 people. Their needs were as great as their numbers, so rapid mobilisation was key.

Caritas Uganda swiftly raised enough funding to work with the Swiss government to support 20 000 refugees. The Ugandan government then asked Caritas Uganda to look after 42 000 refugees in one zone of the camp. Volunteers helped with a seeds and tools distribution to 10 000 families, allowing them to cultivate pulses and vegetables for a better diet and a more dignified life. The host community has not been forgotten though: Caritas is supporting 4 000 local needy families.

PHILIPPINES

Long after many other humanitarian organisations have left after an emergency, Caritas remains with communities to help them rebuild stronger, better lives. Caritas Philippines distributed hygiene kits and helped local people maintain latrines and collect rubbish in the immediate response to the devastating Cyclone Haiyan in 2013. Since then, Caritas has continued to work on longer-term solutions to the problems facing the poor in disaster-prone areas – such as access to clean water.

Villages like Tagalag in the central region of Visayas didn't have a proper drinking water supply before the cyclone. When it came, wells were polluted and people fell ill. But Caritas worked hand-in-hand with community members and the parish to build a piped-water system to supply 185 households.

SYRIA AND REFUGEES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Despite the dangers and difficulties of working inside Syria, Caritas has maintained its humanitarian operations. Caritas Syria continues to access and help as many people as it can – with food, healthcare, education and emotional support.

Across its borders, Caritas Turkey, Caritas Jordan and Caritas Lebanon provide care to the millions of refugees who have fled from Syria. When the cold weather comes, families are given stoves, blankets and warm clothing. Throughout the year, Caritas distributes food, household essentials and cash vouchers. We rehabilitate schools with safe spaces for children to play, help with medical treatment and bills and send social workers and translators to locations where refugees are living to try to solve their problems.

MIGRATION CRISIS

As the migration and refugee crisis continues in Europe, Caritas organisations from across the continent have come together to do everything in their power to help tens of thousands of desperate people. Caritas Croatia served hot tea and soup to exhausted families as they crossed the country, while its neighbor Caritas Serbia distributed food, nappies and hygiene kits. When the winter cold draws in each year, raincoats for children and sleeping bags are also given to the most vulnerable people.

To support Caritas Greece, Caritas members sent staff to train local volunteers in coping with the overwhelming number of needy refugees and migrants. The emergency response has been extremely challenging – but it has proved to Caritas members in Europe that they have very much to offer each other and that their cooperation has been hugely strengthened.

EBOLA OUTBREAK IN WESTERN AFRICA

The brutal effects of the Ebola virus carried away the loved ones leaving behind orphans and parents who lost their children. The death toll was high, accompanied by stress and untold physical and psychological sufferings. The virus chased away the humanitarian actors, but the Church through Caritas and all socio-pastoral services were there before, during and after the crisis. They expressed love, care and solidarity to all. Several Caritas and Church workers lost their loves. *“They said that my husband affected by the virus had died and I could not even look at his face for the last time. His body was burnt. For me it was as if my whole life was burnt and I did not see any reasons to face the future. Caritas was a source of consolation and a message that I had reasons to live,”* explained a woman.

“The rituals of death I experienced when my grandfather passed away a few years ago - the funeral, the church service, the burial, the visits, the wake - were critical for my grieving and healing process,” she said. For people in Sierra Leone, the Ebola outbreak has broken their sacred traditions for honouring the dead.

As Catholic Relief Services scales up its Ebola response, the team in Sierra Leone established a command-and-control centre to manage safe and dignified burials in Port Loko, a district of some 557 900 people in the Northern Province. Cases of Ebola there increased steadily. CRS worked hand in hand with religious leaders of all faiths, who provided critical spiritual guidance in their communities. They helped families identify new rituals that are acceptable under their religious context, but are also safe.



Caritas at the United Nations.

4. VOICE OF THE VOICELESS, ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE AND PEACEBUILDING

“The option or love of preference for the poor... is a special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity, which the whole tradition of the Church bears witness.”

Pope St John Paul II, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, 42.

CLIMATE JUSTICE IN THE PACIFIC AND IN LATIN AMERICA

Caritas advocates for justice for the people hardest hit by climate change. We press for governments to carry out the responsibilities they have signed up for – such as the Paris Climate Agreement of 2015. Caritas attended the annual United Nations meeting in Morocco, which followed the agreement and raised its voice on behalf of the poor in the developing world as a priority.

Caritas members also report on the impact of climate change. In its most recent State of the Environment Report, Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand detailed the widespread hunger and thirst spreading across Oceania. Children in some communities in Fiji had been eating tough cassava roots softened with paracetamol, while in Papua New Guinea, people walked for days to get food and water at the peak of a drought caused by El Niño. National Caritas member organisations supported them.

Caritas listened to the appeal made by Pope Francis in his encyclical, *Laudato Si* - to protect the natural world we call our home, while combating poverty and restoring dignity to the excluded (cf. *Laudato Si*, 139). Pope Francis especially mentioned the need to defend Amazonia as one of the planet's lungs, as well as the often-neglected rights of its people.

Caritas worked as part of the Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network (REPAM) to provide the human rights module of a training programme for community leaders and pastoral workers in the Amazon region.

Participants came from five Amazon countries – Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru for the five weeks of training. Now they are replicating the teaching in local communities across Amazonia.



Caritas Share the Journey Campaign - Ioanach. Patrick Nicholson/Caritas

CAMPAIGNS AND ADVOCACY INITIATIVES

Caritas campaigns and advocates internationally for a better world – especially for the poor and the suffering. Its "Syria: Peace is Possible" campaign, launched in 2016, has been strongly backed by Pope Francis. Caritas also continues to advocate for "food for all", following another campaign, working with faith-based and non-faith based organisations towards zero hunger. We advocate against human trafficking, organising meetings at the United Nations and with other groups, and campaign for access to medicines for adults and children with HIV/AIDS.

As migration is another key area of Caritas advocacy, we press for the rights of undocumented adults and children to be respected and protected. On the ground in countries like Mexico, Caritas supports practical projects such as the Casa del Migrante, a hostel for Mexicans and people from other Central American countries, who are fleeing violence and poverty in the hope of crossing the border to the United States.

FOOD SECURITY

Every year in October, Caritas marks World Food Day - a reminder of the imperative to free humanity from hunger. Despite discouragements stoked by the lack of political will, donor fatigue and the impact of climate change, Caritas continues to advocate internationally and to work at the grassroots to promote its goal of Zero Hunger - Food For All.

In the name of "Breaking Bread," Caritas joined with humanitarian organisations at the United Nations in New York to make a joint commitment towards the second Sustainable Development Goal - ending hunger, achieving food security, improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture.

In Mozambique, Caritas dioceses in Inhambane and Maputo have been implementing food security and sustainable living projects as part of their 5-year strategic plan. They've distributed seeds and tools to 210 very vulnerable families, as well as training on inter-cropping techniques to boost fertility and reduce pests.

Zimbabwe is enduring one of the very worst droughts in its history. In the province of Mutare, Caritas Zimbabwe is working with farmers who suffer food insecurity, even in a good year.

In the village of Chikwizi, people had become dependent on food aid from a local NGO, but felt that they were viewed as lazy and unwilling to work for themselves. In 2013, Caritas Zimbabwe carried out a needs assessment, where villagers proposed their priorities for action. Caritas Mutare followed up with an irrigation scheme, a small-grain farming project and the establishment of market gardens. Maize yields have doubled and hunger and social problems have eased.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The 17 goals with 169 targets of the (SDGs) set out the journey necessary by 2030 to banish poverty and inequality. They have a huge influence on governments and donors, whom Caritas has pledged to hold accountable for their actions.

Caritas Europa in 2016 published policy papers focused on how the European Union is responding to the challenges presented by the SDGs. Caritas Europa called for accelerated action and expressed concern at migration management concerns taking precedence over development policy. It said resources and investment must be shifted to allow people to stay at home, building their livelihoods and communities.

Throughout 2016, Caritas Europa advocated for decent working practices at parallel events and through its touring exhibition, "Behind the Barcode."

Many members of the Caritas confederation – such as Caritas Nigeria, Caritas Ghana and Caritas Kenya – developed strategies to guide their work towards meeting the SDGs and partnered with their governments to achieve this.

PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS

Justice at work for domestic workers! With a small campaign called "Under the same roof, under the same law", Caritas Internationalis



advocated for the recognition of domestic work as work, for fair and just working conditions and for the adoption of an ILO Convention (Nr. 189) "Decent Work for Domestic Workers". The convention was adopted on 16 June 2011. Many migrant workers were and are still abused as migrant domestic workers. Caritas Internationalis continues to be engaged in advocating for the implementation of this Convention which has been ratified so far by 25 countries.

ADVOCATING FOR PEACE

As an active member of the Catholic Peacebuilding Network, Caritas builds up peacemaking efforts with advocates, scholars, experts and religious leaders everywhere. They are engaged in peacebuilding and defense of all human rights while working collegially and ecumenically with an inter-religious openness to address every kind of impediment to peace and stability.

Caritas Colombia has been recognised as the primary Non Governmental Organisation to advocate on the peace process, victims' rights, disarmament, land reclamation and violence against women. In 15 years, Caritas advocacy at UN/HQ sustained awareness raising, breakthroughs from the ground up. Msgr. Hector Fabio of Caritas Colombia has been very active in that regard. With the support of Caritas Internationalis Delegation in New York, he frequently gave high-level testimonies and interventions at UN conferences, followed by major NGO briefing with diplomats, faith based organisations and religious leaders, as well as a mediation team on Colombia at UN/DPA. All that contributed to the success of the peace process in Colombia.



CI Secretary Gen. Michel Roy and Ms Immonen, the Director of World Service, Lutheran World Federation Signing of Declaration of intent CI-WLF 31.10.2016.
Mikael Ringlander/Church of Sweden

5. NETWORKING AND CONNECTING PEOPLES

“Charity... is the principle not only of micro-relationships (with friends, with family members or within small groups) but also of macro-relationships (social, economic and political ones)”

Pope Benedict XVI, Caritas in Veritate, 2.

In October 2016, Pope Francis joined the president of the Lutheran Church in Sweden for a day of prayer and fundraising for the work of Caritas and the Lutheran World Federation in Syria.

Over 10 000 people gathered in Malmö under the theme of “Together in Hope” to listen to inspiring testimonies from survivors of conflicts in Burundi and Colombia as well as Syria. Caritas Internationalis and the World Lutheran Federation signed a Declaration of Intent to strengthen their collaboration. This follows Pope Francis’s policy of opening ecumenical doors, for which he said “listening” was essential.

Filmmakers, artists, designers and communication officers joined together for the Syria: Peace is Possible Campaign. Whether as backdrops to an event with Lutherans in Sweden or to be given to Pope Francis in the Vatican, their photos, animations, posters, films and stories were widely used in Syria and beyond, with other 50 member organisations incorporating them into their public education work.



CRS staff train the people we serve in Mokolo Extreme North Cameroon in post harvest techniques. CRS

6. BUILDING COMPETENCE AND CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

The poor deserves the best of our service so strengthening the confederation and its membership has become a priority for Caritas Internationalis. “There is no small or big Caritas” said Pope Francis during the Caritas Internationalis General Assembly in 2015. He has shown strong support to the implementation by all Caritas members of the Management Standards agreed by the governance bodies of Caritas Internationalis.

More and more Caritas members have recruited new and qualified staff in response to the growing needs. The Africa Regional Caritas established a local programme, which is tailored to its needs, while Central Asia created a sub-region, coordinated by Caritas Mongolia. The youngest Caritas member – Caritas South Sudan – is being supported in its growth and confidence.

“Caritas Mongolia was born in the late nineties and till 2002 was highly dependent on external aid. One day I asked myself: should not the members of the confederation think of giving us the possibility to become autonomous? I discussed with some Caritas Internationalis partners and asked for help,” said Fr. Pierrot, Executive Director- Caritas Mongolia. A small group was set up to accompany Caritas Mongolia. Fifteen years later, this Caritas has become a model of growth and is able to develop big programmes, negotiate with back donors and implement diverse activities. Caritas Mongolia, although part of a minority Church, is able to negotiate with the government and also advise the government on some important issues related to disaster management, agricultural development and other social programmes.

All these stories are just few and concrete examples of what Caritas has recently done in various parts of the world. Many other actors have also engaged in different ways to combat hunger, ignorance, oppression and to assist victims of natural and manmade disasters.

What is the specificity of Caritas?

What are our sources of inspiration?

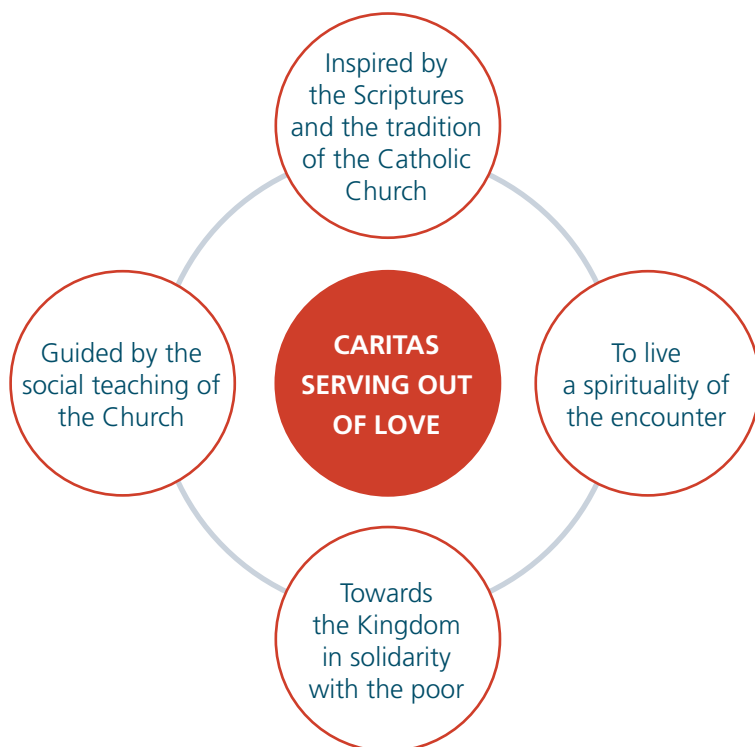
THE CHARITY OF CHRIST URGES US

Caritas Christi Urget Nos (2 Cor 5.14)

Those who serve in Caritas mission must be first and foremost “true witnesses of Christ”. Pope Benedict

Jesus identified himself with the hungry, the thirsty, the strangers, the naked, the sick, the prisoners. We are called to recognise the face of Jesus in the faces of our brothers and sisters, in particular the poor and the marginalised.

Caritas work has been rooted in and inspired by Church tradition and history, since its foundation.



1. YOUR WORD IS A LAMP FOR MY FEET, A LIGHT ON MY PATH! (PS 119:105)

The Scriptures teach us that the love of God cannot be dissociated from the love for the neighbour. *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your might”* (Deut 6:4-5). Jesus united into a single commandment of love for God and the commandment of love for the neighbour found in the book of Leviticus: *“You shall love your neighbour as yourself”* (cf. Leviticus 19:18; cf. Mark 12:29-30). Pope Benedict observes that *“Since God has first loved us (cf. 1Jn 4:10), love is no longer a mere command; it is the response to the gift of love with which God draws near to us”* (DCE n.1). Thus Jesus’ emphasis: *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another”* (Jn 13:34-35).

“The charity of Christ urges us”, says St. Paul to the Corinthians (2 Cor 5:14). In the Gospel of Luke we see how Jesus understood his mission. He was anointed and sent to preach the Good News to the poor, to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and the recovery

of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of Lord's favour (Cf. Luke 4, 16-19). The God of Jesus is the one *"who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever, who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry, who sets the prisoners free, who watches over the strangers, who lifts up those who are bowed down and loves the righteous; who upholds the orphan and the widow..."* (cf. Ps 146).

The mission entrusted to Caritas as an integral part of the Church consists in following Jesus' footsteps, by doing what the Master did. He went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him (Acts 10:38). He was never indifferent to any suffering. He is the good Samaritan (Luke 10, 29-37), a man of compassion who cares for the wounded and the abandoned. He is the wounded and the abandoned seeking our attention and immediate care. In this fundamental parable for Caritas identity and mission, Jesus underlines the personal decision of the Samaritan to be a neighbour of the victim: *"Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbour to the robbers' victim? (...)* Go and do likewise" (Luke 10, 36-37).

Following the footsteps of Christ, seeing with his eyes and loving like him sustained by his grace, obliges us to ask ourselves which person we wish to serve and promote. This is why formation of the heart is so important (cf. *Deus Caritas est* 31a). We see in our neighbour a being created in the image and likeness of God called to live in fullness with God, a person with a body and a soul called to relationship, to the gift of him or herself, to communion with his or her neighbour and with God, to eternal life with God. This is the person we want to promote. The mandate of charity that Christ left us encompasses all dimensions of existence, all individuals, all areas of community life, and all peoples. Nothing human can be alien to it (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium* 181). Therefore, the vision of a person cannot be reduced to a mere body, to the promotion of a consumer who has nothing human left, but which leads to the culture of waste, division, individualism, contempt for the other, and the arrogance of wealth.

In Caritas, we recognise that Jesus identified himself with the hungry, the thirsty, the strangers, the naked, the sick, the prisoners. He pointed out the criteria for our last judgement: *I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me* (cf. Mt 25: 31-46). Therefore, we are called to recognise the face of Jesus in the faces of our brothers and sisters, in particular the poor and the marginalised. We are reminded of the principal works of charity and mercy, characteristic of an authentic relation with God in the teaching of the prophets: share your food with the hungry, provide the poor wanderer with shelter, clothe the naked (cf. Is 58,7). The Prophet Micah has this wonderful and so inspirational statement for us: *"The Lord has shown you, O man what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly, to love mercy and walk humbly with your God"* (Micah 6:8).

2. A CHURCH'S TRADITION

Caritas work is equally rooted and inspired by the Scriptures and the tradition of the Church since its foundation. The Acts of the Apostles have shown how charity was central to the life of the first Christian communities. They shared all they had. *"All who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need"* (Acts 2:44-5). Listening to the teaching of the Apostles, gathering for prayers, breaking of bread and caring for each other were united.

St. Paul, whose life and ministry was dedicated to building Christian communities, put the service of charity at the centre of his teachings, calling for *"collection for God's holy people"* (cf. 1 Cor 16, 1-2).

The Church Fathers have unequivocally insisted on the supreme importance of the service of charity in the Church and by the Church. St. Basil relates how St. Lawrence distributed the treasures of the Church to the poor of the Church of Rome before being martyred, and when questioned by a pagan governor regarding the treasure which he had promised to transmit, Lawrence pointed to the poor saying: *"They are the treasures in whom is Christ in whom is faith"*. To urge the precept of charity more effectively, the Fathers

teach that the wealthy are God's stewards and dispensers, so much so that where they refuse to give to the needy they are guilty of theft (St. Gregory, St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom). St. Cyprian even asserts that adherents of other religions must not be excluded from sharing in Catholic charity (*De Opere et Eleemosyna*), emphasising the universal nature of charity which by its very definition cannot be exclusive.

In the early Church, charitable activity was linked to the celebration of the Eucharist, which, as reaffirmed by the Vatican Council II, was at the origin of Christian communities, and the source and the summit of the whole Christian life (cf. *Lumen Gentium* 11). In his encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*, Pope Benedict gives a summary of the place of the service of charity in the early Church, quoting personalities such as Justin Martyr (+ c. 155) and his statement about the Christians' celebration of Sunday; the great Christian writer Tertullian (+after 220) who relates how the pagans were struck by the Christians' concern for the needy of every sort; Ignatius of Antioch describing the Church of Rome as presiding in charity... (cf. *Deus Caritas Est* n.22).

In May 2013, two months after his election, Pope Francis had these words for the members of the Representative Council of Caritas Internationalis: *"Caritas is an essential part of the Church; Caritas institutionalizes love in the Church"*

The Motu Proprio *"Intima Ecclesiae Natura"* of Pope Benedict XVI has highlighted the bond of Caritas with the Church and therefore with the bishop who is called to promote and coordinate the charitable services in his diocese, to guide, to supervise and to ensure the "formation of the heart" of those serving under his responsibility (cf. IEN.art.7§ 2).

3. SPIRITUALITY OF CARITAS

Spirituality is a mode of life in the Spirit, a docility to its life giving power, which mobilises all areas of our existence.

The Word of God illuminates our minds and moulds our hearts for

the exercise of fraternal charity and for justice, to serve communities, to live a solid spirituality of communion with Christ and to be docile to the actions of the Spirit. In this way we develop a spirituality of gratitude, mercy, and fraternal solidarity, proper attitudes of one who loves disinterestedly and seeks no recompense.

The starting point to trigger our spirituality is love of the Father, seen in the presence, face, human actions and words, and unconditional love bestowed upon Jesus, through never ending love in order to give life to every person and to all humanity. Therefore *"being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction"* (*Deus Caritas Est* 1).

In other words, the source of spirituality for Caritas is the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, his actions, his words, his very person, who went about doing good, healing the sick, returning sight to the blind and proclaiming the Good News of salvation, revealing to us the infinite love of his Father and our Father. This theological event forms the basis of the necessary relationship that exists between Caritas and evangelisation, as this is the duty of those with whom we collaborate and work in Caritas, continuously proclaiming and remembering the centrality of Christ in the solution to problems relating to justice and development. This is in fact the initial contribution: to apply to modern day problems the same attitude and words that Christ shared with his contemporaries, continuing the Church in this way, through the work of salvation as the one who gave His life to sanctify it.

It is true that in historical depictions of the crucifixion we find Christ suffering, *"but this contemplation of Christ cannot stop at the image of the Crucified One. He is the Risen One!"* (*Novo Millennio Ineunte* n°28). We also see Christ in so many acts of love and solidarity from our people, every day we experience the paschal mystery of our Lord and this fills our work with spirituality, because he is the Risen One, who triumphs over sin, oppression, injustice, evil and death. Going beyond harsh reality, our faith knows how to find him alive, present and risen, in this way making sure that violence, pain, injustice and death do not have the last word.

This experience of resurrection comes through visiting our communities and witnessing the enormous effort people make to move forward with modest, almost non-existent means. Faced with the most adverse and desperate situations, in this way they evangelise us, bringing the exchange process of our involvement full circle. Given that anyone carrying out work in the name of Caritas, on experiencing this commitment from so many people, especially the impoverished, cannot help but fix their eyes once more on Christ who *“has come that they may have life, and have it to the full”* (John 10:10)

In this paschal spirituality, we find spaces for happiness, freedom, affection, hope and the enthusiasm necessary to strengthen ourselves and improve our interiority, especially when we discover that we have not met the goals that we had set ourselves, that there is still much need and much poverty before us. We realise that we may have only contributed a small part to making this world more human, and to making sure that the hope for a better future is not lost, but in the certainty that it is the Spirit of the Lord Jesus which is guiding us and helping us to love and do everything with love (...) because *“if I do not have love, I am worth nothing, I have nothing, I am nothing...”* (1 Cor 13:1).

4. THE KINGDOM OF GOD AS THE HORIZON OF CARITAS

We are convinced that the immense wealth of Caritas does not lie in bank accounts or the number of projects, workers or volunteers (...) but rather in Jesus Christ who died and rose again. What we have is faith in Him, that he will help us to build a praying, fraternal and mutually supportive community. Therefore, our responsibility is to create meeting places and places for support where modest yet meaningful experiences can be shared, which is of the utmost importance in building the Kingdom of God.

Our treasure is the knowledge that communities are the seeds of life, of justice, of affection and of hope and that this is only possible because the Lord changes the world and the people in it from within. Some of the most prominent figures have come from the community and have been the builders of it themselves, their

experience contributing to building the Kingdom, giving rise to it and believing that the Lord would ensure its successful outcome.

To live this dynamic, we need to maintain our ongoing personal and pastoral conversion in proximity with Christ, Master and Shepherd, supported by the sacraments of the Church.

The mystery of the Incarnation of Jesus in the history of humanity requires that all Christians take on to themselves the sufferings and realities of those who need them. They must open their eyes and see the misery of the world, the wounds of their brothers and sisters who are denied their dignity, they are compelled to heed their cry for help! May we reach out to them and support them so they can feel the warmth of our presence, our friendship, and our fraternity! May their cry become our own, and together may we break down the barriers of indifference (cf. *Misericordiae Vultus*, 15).

This is why we wish to enact the vision of Pope Benedict: *“For us, the option for the poor is not ideological but is born from the Gospel. Situations of injustice and poverty in today’s world are numerous and tragic, and if it is necessary to seek to understand them and fight their structural causes, it is also necessary to penetrate to the very heart of man, to extirpate the deep roots of evil and sin that cut him off from God, without forgetting to meet people’s most urgent needs in the spirit of Christ’s charity.”* (Address of his Holiness Benedict XVI, at the XXXV General Congregation of the Society of Jesus)

“What we do, we do for Jesus”, St. Mother Teresa would declare when asked for the reason for her work and endeavours; she went on to say: *“We need the eyes of a profound faith to see Christ in the maimed bodies and dirty clothes in which is hidden the fairest among the sons of men. We need the hands of Christ to touch this body wounded with sorrow and suffering”* (Mother Teresa of Calcutta, *“Tu m’apportes l’Amour”* [you bring me love], counsels collected by G. Gorré and G. Barbier, Santander, Sal Terrae, 1979, pp. 115-126).

5. IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE POOR

We share the conviction that the Preferential Option for the Poor - whom we are called to serve, accompany and defend (Pope Francis) is not just a choice but a spiritual and moral obligation. We believe that the encounter with the poor represents a call for personal conversion for each one of us, leading to the building of an inclusive society, where each member contributes to the well-being of all. In that sense, we commit ourselves and work towards the building of the Kingdom of God, a kingdom of peace and justice. We recognise the need to let ourselves be evangelised by the poor, their experience... of the suffering Christ (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*), their humility and their generosity.

We value the capacity of the poor to be protagonists of their own development... and we seek to create the conditions for their full implication and participation in all that we do.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs, blessed are those who weep, blessed are those who thirst for justice" (Mt 5:3). As Oscar Romero wrote, "The Church - whose Caritas shares the mission - cries out following the example of Christ, that the poor will save the world. Because both the rich and the poor have to become poor, in an evangelical sense, not the poverty that is the fruit of disorder and vice, but rather the poverty that has freed itself, that is trusting that everything will come from God, that is turning its back on the golden calf in order to adore the one God, that is sharing the happiness of having with those who have not, that is the joy of loving" (Daily Meditations, 12-13).

Solidarity with the poor implies both being personally close to them and, at the same time, being attentive to the human causes of poverty in the world. In that sense, Caritas works and acts towards "building a just social order, wherein each person receives what is his or her due" (*Deus Caritas Est* n.28). It's part of Caritas member organisations' mission to fight against extreme poverty and to address it as the evil that it is, in the light of the social doctrine of the Church.

The World Day of the Poor launched by Pope Francis at the end of the Jubilee of Mercy gives the opportunity to Caritas members to, even more, contribute to building Christian communities that are real signs of Christ's charity, by ensuring that the poor are considered as an integral part of our communities in which they have a special role to play. We will engage with other Church's actors to encourage an authentic encounter with the poor and give rise to sharing that becomes a lifestyle (cf. Pope Francis, Message for the World Day of the Poor 2017).

6. A COMMON CULTURE SHAPED BY THE CHURCH'S SOCIAL TEACHING

The social teaching of the Church provides criteria for judgment and lines of action in order to encourage a praxis that is transformative of reality, according to the values of the Gospel which constitute the "common culture" of those who serve in Caritas.

Caritas members' engagement, with the community and with all people of good will, abides by Catholic Social Teaching principles. They may facilitate faith to enter into dialogue with politics, culture and economy, so as to transform them according to God's plan.



Caritas Colombia workshop on social transformation. Caritas Colombia

Blessed Oscar Romero reminded all the members of the Church of the urgent task of renewing our missionary dynamism, contributing to building a just and fraternal society, where poverty, hunger, violence, injustice are banished and where every human being “*has life to the full*” (Jn. 10:10).

The mission of the Church is to bear witness to Jesus, the Word of God incarnate among the poor. Through its social teaching, the Church offers guidance to the faithful and to humanity and provides criteria for judgment and lines of action in order to encourage a praxis that is transformative of reality, according to the values of the Gospel which constitute the “common culture” of those who serve in Caritas.

Since 1891, when Pope Leo XIII published the famous encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, until today the social teaching of the Church has become a prophetic voice, denouncing the signs of an anti-culture of death, which attacks the dignity of human beings, harms the common good, and violates their rights.

The Church has also rejected the structures of sin, which create chasms between some rich, powerful minorities and impoverished, excluded majorities - calling to conversion those who use power as an instrument of domination, who are authors of imperialism and war and plague the world with destruction. Through her social teaching, the Church has been questioning an individualist, consumerist and materialistic cultural model, which denies solidarity, fraternity and other transcendent values.

The CST enlightens, in the light of the Word of God, the changing temporary realities, promoting as **PERMANENT PRINCIPLES** the inviolability of human dignity, the universal destination of the goods of creation, the primacy of labour over capital, participation in the search for the common good, subsidiarity and solidarity, all taken from, and supporting the perspective of the **PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR**, an ethical imperative essential for effectively attaining the common good.

Since its foundation Caritas has based its spirituality and mission on living these principles. Our being and doing is rooted in a spirituality of the encounter, that allows faith to enter into dialogue with politics, culture and the economy, so as to transform them according to God's plan. The Catholic Social Teaching provides useful tools for this universalistic dialogue.

All Catholic Social Teaching principles are theological and philosophical instruments which allow Caritas members to engage with the community of the faithful and with all the people of good will. They constantly help us to start from reality, to listen to and to reflect on what the Magisterium said and so to discover in the transforming action of Caritas, concrete ways of celebrating, witnessing the love and mercy of the God of Life. Catholic Social Teaching in turn learns from the Church's experience “*in socialibus*” thanks to her praxis of Caritas. In this regards, “*we can count on many lay persons...who have a deeply-rooted sense of community and great fidelity to the tasks of charity, catechesis and the celebration of the faith*”, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 102.

KEY CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING PRINCIPLES APPLIED TO CARITAS WORK

INTEGRAL HUMAN PROMOTION

Caritas is convinced that human promotion and development must be holistic and integral and cannot be restricted to economic growth alone. To be authentic, it must foster the development of each man and woman and of all human persons (cf. *Populorum Progressio*, 14). A holistic development of the human person must cover all aspects of life: spiritual, religious, cultural, health, psycho-social, etc.

DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

Each and every human person is created in the likeness of God and has an inalienable dignity that should always be safeguarded. Consequently, human life is sacred. Caritas actions are human centred: technologies, money and power should always be a way of serving.

COMMON GOOD AND COMMUNITY

The good of each human person is intimately related to the good of the whole community. The community must be fair and enable participation and access to and use of the goods of creation by everyone. This implies collaboration of all sectors of the community and not working in isolation. The Caritas approach is to listen to the needs and wishes of the community, especially the poor and the most vulnerable.

PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR

A basic moral principle for judging a fair society is the way in which it treats its most vulnerable members, whose needs should come first. This is true for the Church, as well as for any democratic state. Reaching out to the most marginalised and facilitating their integration in the community is a priority and a constant challenge for Caritas.

RIGHTS AND DUTIES

We believe that human dignity is protected and the common good safeguarded only if human rights are guaranteed and the corresponding duties are respected. Basic human rights such as the right to food, education, shelter and health care have always been at the core of Caritas' advocacy work and actions.

ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND SUBSIDIARITY

It's the duty of governments and civil society actors, including the Church, to scrupulously respect the principle of subsidiarity and promote decision-making processes that are empowering for those involved at all levels. Functions of governments and other parties should be carried out at the lowest possible level with the support of the highest level. Subsidiarity implies the conviction that both society and state cannot be built but by free citizens who freely and responsibly contribute to the common good (cf. St. Thomas Aquinas).

GLOBAL SOLIDARITY

We believe in one human family. Solidarity is a firm and persevering determination to serve the common good, because we are all responsible for all (cf. JP II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 1987, #38).



PARTICIPATION

We believe that individuals and communities must be allowed to participate in the decisions that affect them and which they consider as important. We strive to put in place mechanisms so that the people we serve are the "makers and judges" of programmes (Amartya Sen, Nobel Prize winner for Economics).

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

It's our conviction that the economy, including the market, should serve the people and not the contrary and we work to challenge the logic of the idolatry of money that tends to rule as Pope Francis frequently denounces. We believe that people are more important than assets, and employment is more important than capital. The economy should be oriented towards a fair and equitable distribution of resources.

PROMOTION OF PEACE

For us, peace is a concept oriented towards action, not just absence of war (cf. John Paul II). It implies fair relations among people and

groups, between peoples and the environment, between peoples and their idea of the transcendent. Peace is the fruit of justice and is dependent... upon just order... among human beings. We promote the culture of non-violence and support programmes that encourage reconciliation and peaceful co-existence.

CARE FOR CREATION AND NATURE

We recognise that the Earth and all that is on it has been entrusted to us by the Creator who made us custodians and carers of Creation. Promoting integral human development, therefore, comprises the respect of the dignity of every person, the cooperation with the common good, and the caring of our common home. This is what the encyclical *Laudato Si* calls integral ecology, a source of inspiration for many years to come. Because of this interconnection between integral human development and integral ecology, between the carer of human beings, other creatures and the environment, it is part of our responsibility to strongly act against climate change.



At the school in Fuhais, Balqa, Jordan, Syrian children get non-formal education.
Isabel Corthier/Caritas

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ) ABOUT CARITAS

The service of charity needs to be organised. Pope Francis stressed that the service of charity of the Church and by the Church is “institutionalised” in Caritas. On the one hand, this has theological/ ecclesiological implications, as we have seen and will continue to highlight. On the other, this requires structures for governance and management, as well as various means including, human resources, finances and logistics, among others.

Equally, as an organisation, Caritas undertakes its mission in society alongside other actors and stakeholders in pursuit of the common good.

Many questions are frequently asked about the Caritas organisation. We have selected some of them, which we are attempting to answer briefly in the hope of helping Church activists, Caritas staff, and partners to have clarity about this complex organisation, what it stands for and how it operates.

1. WHAT IS THE CARITAS CONFEDERATION?

The term “confederation” applied to Caritas may be understood by referring to the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council and more specifically to the dogmatic constitution “*Lumen Gentium*,” where the Church is defined as the People of God (LG 9f), a community of believers and Body of Christ (LG 7f), which lives and proclaims the Gospel, through preaching, celebration of the sacraments and works of charity in such a manner as to be able to dialogue with the contemporary world (DCE 25.a). Caritas Internationalis is a pioneer in the application of the new vision of the Church initiated by the Council, namely *the Church, the People of God, on their way through history*.

Bishops are responsible for their particular Church, including the diocesan and national Caritas. They also have responsibility for encouraging parishes to be engaged in Caritas ministry (cf. *Motu Proprio Intima Ecclesiae Natura*). Bishops do this work in intimate union with the Universal Church and the See of Peter.

The founding of the confederation came about as a result of people dedicated to serving the poor around the world. The Church has worked alongside the poor throughout its history. In 1897, the first ever Caritas was founded in Germany. Caritas organisations developed in Europe and the United States. Out of the suffering of two world wars the need for national Catholic humanitarian organisations was seen and Caritas begins to grow in North America and Europe.

1950 saw the beginning of a union of Caritas organisations. Through the inspiration of Msgr. Montini (the future Pope Paul VI), substitute Secretary of State for the Vatican, 13 Caritas members met in Rome to discuss the problems facing their work. Out of this emerged Caritas Internationalis.

Msgr. Montini made a unique contribution to the structure of Caritas Internationalis (CI) as a confederation. When CI was being established he was thinking of the formula of European Benedictine monasteries.

These congregations are defined as a confederation, bringing together monastic congregations and autonomous monasteries. The confederation perpetuates the religious ideal of Benedictine monasticism in accordance with the rule and spirit of St. Benedict: autonomy in communion. Each monastery is autonomously governed, while all the monasteries form a confederation that has community amongst themselves and with the Holy See. Today this principle is carried forward in the structure of Caritas Internationalis as a confederation.

Today the Church describes Caritas as its official voice: “in relation to its teaching in the area of charity work.”

The secretariat of CI was transferred to Rome in the late 1950's. On 4th November 1954, the International Caritas Conference was given permission by the Holy See to definitively adopt as its new name, the term, “Caritas Internationalis”. This was followed by the creation of Caritas in different parts of the world. Today Caritas Internationalis represents 165 national Caritas working in 200 countries and territories in different parts of the world.

2. HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO THE CARITAS CONFEDERATION?

The legal formulation of the confederation highlights the unity in autonomy of the individual members which are the national Caritas duly mandated by their respective bishops' conferences. This means that the national Caritas organisations do not depend on Caritas Internationalis, but rather it is the international level that depends on the orientation that the national Caritas wish to give it.

The supreme policy body of CI is the General Assembly, during which all the members of the confederation propose strategic objectives to be applied. Likewise, statutory fees, which represent the confederation's main source of funding, are not merely a financial instrument. Indeed, they provide a guarantee of equal representation and importance within the overall mosaic of the confederation to all the members.

3. IF THE MEMBERS OF CARITAS INTERNATIONALIS ARE NATIONAL CARITAS, WHAT ABOUT DIOCESAN/PARISH CARITAS?

In fact, the membership to Caritas Internationalis is a legal issue. Members of CI are national Caritas whose role is to facilitate the coordination of the social pastoral work of the Church in a given country, under the leadership of the episcopal conference. Talking about the form of confederation applied to Caritas Internationalis, the concept of collegiality, communion and autonomy has been pointed out. This applies also to diocesan Caritas. They are first and foremost instruments of the diocesan bishops to witness the compassion of the entire diocesan community to every person in need.

They are equally instruments of communion and cooperation beyond the diocese in the work of charity and justice. According to the principle of subsidiarity, diocesan Caritas and even parish Caritas are the implementers of concrete actions and services to the most needy. In reality, the service of charity incarnates in socio-pastoral work, and it is precisely at the parish/community and diocesan levels that this becomes concrete through activities that promote social justice, respect for human rights, care for the most needy. It's precisely there that the Gospel and celebration of the sacraments, in particular the Eucharist contribute to change and transform the relationships and social structures of our societies according to Jesus' person and His project. Diocesan and parish Caritas play a key role in animating and mobilising the believers as well as men and women of good will, allowing them to act collectively and to put together resources, including financial and material to support humanitarian interventions, livelihood and community development actions.

4. WHAT IS THE KEY FUNCTIONS OF A PARISH CARITAS AND HOW TO ORGANISE IT?

A parish is only working if it breathes with both lungs: spirituality and solidarity. Thus a parish Caritas points out that we meet Jesus

in every needy person. A parish Caritas leads to awareness that we cannot renounce on compassion and charity as we cannot renounce on Eucharist and the ministry of the word. It opens up spaces to make Christian charity tangible for the whole parish and all its members.

Caritas cannot be delegated. The Church fulfils itself in celebration of liturgy in prayer and thanksgiving (*Liturgia*), the proclamation of Faith (*Martyria and Kerygma*) and its works for the poor (*Diaconia*) in addition to the communion (*Koinonia*) and activities to promote unity, fraternity and dialogue within the same community and others. As in none of these principles we can be substituted: how can parish Caritas be organised?

- In the diocesan system of the order of parishes, it should be mandatory that in every parish there has to be a representative of Caritas.
- The Caritas representative is supported and accompanied by a team.
- Together they are something like a "visual aid" for the whole parish with one focus: see the need and do what is necessary.
- The parish Caritas should be linked to the diocesan Caritas.

5. WHAT PRECISELY, IS THE LINK BETWEEN CARITAS AND THE CHURCH? SHOULD BISHOPS AND PRIESTS INTERFERE IN CARITAS WORK?

The Caritas confederation is a Church organisation. There is no Church without Caritas and equally Caritas cannot exist without the Church. The nature of the Church is to be a community. The bishop's mission is to ensure the unity desired by Christ. Therefore, the place and the role of the bishop towards Caritas are central as with any pastoral duty. "Do you resolve, for the sake of the Lord's name, to be welcoming and merciful to the poor, to strangers, and to all who are in need? (Liturgy of the ordination of bishops). *The Motu Proprio "Intima Ecclesiae Natura"* of Pope Benedict XVI (Dec. 2012) has clearly highlighted how the service of charity must be organised under the leadership of the bishop.

He is called to cherish, sustain and promote, but also to care and provide for (cf. *IEN* 4,5,7). He must encourage the creation in each parish of Caritas or similar organisations that should play among others the pedagogical (animation) role in the parish community (art.9). The bishop will ensure that the Church is given the right to carry out charitable activities by civil authorities. He must comply with civil legislation. He must facilitate the coordination of charitable activities at diocesan level by putting in place appropriate structures to promote coordination and synergy and avoid duplication and competition. Also, he is to respect the autonomy and the statutes of each charitable service which in any case must be approved by him. In particular the bishop must take care that charitable activities keep alive the spirit of the Gospel (art.6).

6. WHAT IS THE LEGAL STATUS OF CARITAS INTERNATIONALIS?

In 1976, CI received a civil juridical personality from the Vatican City State. In 2000, in order to clarify the relationship of the organism towards the Holy See and the Italian State, CI made the request to obtain a public canonical legal personality. This means not only having a civil recognition in the Vatican State, but also an official recognition of the Holy See as an institution of the Church. It was on 16 September 2004 that His Holiness Pope John Paul II granted public canonical legal personality to the Caritas Internationalis confederation, indicating some basic guidelines for the activity of Caritas and its relationship with the various dicasteries of the Holy See.

To understand the legal status of Caritas Internationalis, it is important to refer to Canon 116 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law, which specifies that public legal entities act with the purposes for which they had been established, that is *nomine Ecclesiae*, in the name of the Church. This characteristic is not something small because it implies that an organisation that has a public status in the Church manifests officially in some way what the Church teaches! The canonical status was further enacted on 2 May 2012 when the Secretary of State of the Holy See gave new Statutes and Internal Rules to Caritas Internationalis.

7. WHAT IS THE STRUCTURE OF CARITAS INTERNATIONALIS?

A General Assembly (GA) convened every four years, brings together all the members. Orientations, the strategic plan and vision and mission are either reviewed or discussed during the meetings of the GA which is the highest governance body of the confederation. The governance body of CI between GAs is the Representative Council composed of the president and the treasurer elected by the GA, the vice-presidents, and representatives of member organisations elected by the regions and ratified by the GA. An Executive Board (EXBO) composed of the president, the first and second deputy president, a delegate elected by the Representative Council and three individuals appointed by the Holy Father, acts as an executive arm of the REPCO. It facilitates the implementation of the decisions of the REPCO and supervises the work of the General Secretariat.

The 165 national Caritas Member Organisations are grouped under seven regions, and each region coordinates the work of Caritas in their respective regional and national jurisdictions.

8. HOW DOES FRATERNAL COOPERATION INFORM THE WAY WE WORK TOGETHER?

Caritas is a network of solidarity and fraternal cooperation based on the principle of unity in diversity. Caritas Internationalis promotes communion and mutual support among its members. It facilitates the organisation of various services and their coordination to build synergy and to avoid duplication and competition among Caritas members. Thus, partnership and fraternal cooperation is a fundamental principle for the confederation.

Fraternal cooperation makes us aware of the diversity in our Caritas family and, at the same time, it helps us feel united by the same Lord in the community of His disciples. This leads us to a determined will to cooperate at the national, regional and international levels. This willingness to work together is based on the principle of fraternal cooperation and the conviction that although each Caritas member is autonomous, *“together we are more!”*

Our fraternal cooperation is built on three fundamental pillars: mutual support, subsidiarity and capacity building.

"We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves" (Rom 15:1). Caritas members join their efforts to express unconditional love. Like the disciples of Emmaus, they journey together to discover the Lord in his Word and in the breaking and the sharing of the bread.

Members strive to pull together and to accompany those who are less resourced so that they may grow and take their own responsibility.

9. CAN A CARITAS MEMBER OPEN AN OFFICE IN ANOTHER COUNTRY? IF YES, WHAT IS THE PROCESS TO BE FOLLOWED?

Yes, a Caritas member may open an office in another country. However, prior to opening such an office, the Caritas member's leadership must discuss the matter with the episcopal conference of the country where the new office is to be opened. Is the office really needed? What will it achieve? Will it be acting as a supra Caritas organisation that will not be in synergy with the local Caritas? Or, will it be working in close collaboration with the local Caritas. It is advisable to clarify the objectives of the proposed Caritas office, ensure real partnership with the local Caritas, see to it that the presence of the foreign Caritas in the country results in a win-win situation for the local and foreign Caritas organisations. A memorandum of understanding can be helpful to provide clear terms of reference to guide the opening and the functioning of a Caritas in another country and consequently in another "particular Church". Regular monitoring shall be carried out in order to celebrate the achievements and to determine areas of improvement. A regular country forum is believed to be helpful as it provides a meeting space to share, plan, and coordinate efforts at the service of the poor.

The spirit of the CI partnership principle is embedded in mutual support and synergy, not competition, coordination not duplication, transparency and accountability, not only to the donors but also to the people we serve.

10. WHAT DOES "PROFESSIONALISM" HAVE TO DO WITH CARITAS? IS GOOD WILL NOT ENOUGH?

Because the poor deserve the best! Caritas is a network of service and solidarity to witness God's love to all. In that sense, Caritas is not a simple NGO though, as an organisation it must integrate all the authentic qualities of a well-organised and well-managed institution. Caritas is accountable, especially to the people it serves and stewards of the mission and the resources it is entrusted with by the Church and by those who support its work. Caritas strives to offer the best service which the poorest deserve and the best that the organisation can offer.

Caritas believes that "...While professional competence is a primary, fundamental requirement, it is not of itself sufficient. Caritas social workers are dealing with human beings, and human beings always need something more than technically proper care: they need humanity. They need heartfelt concern. Those who work for the Church's charitable organisations must be distinguished by the fact that they do not merely meet the needs of the moment, but they dedicate themselves to others with heartfelt concern, enabling them to experience the richness of their humanity. Consequently, in addition to their necessary professional training, these charity workers need a 'formation of the heart'." (DCE.31).

11. WHAT IS THE PLACE AND ROLE OF VOLUNTEERS IN CARITAS?

All the same, Caritas favours and encourages voluntary work. In fact many Caritas organisations rely on the commitment of so many men and women who offer their services as volunteers in the name of their faith. Most of them are highly qualified persons and have a valuable professional background in different fields, like management, social work, logistics, etc. Many Caritas wouldn't do much without the support of those volunteers. In fact, volunteer work within Caritas is one of the pillars of this organisation worldwide and at all levels. Volunteering opportunities

at Caritas vary from occasional support at events to activities in offices and spaces of daily living.

When working with social groups and communities, it is necessary to adhere to principles based on dialogue and collective efforts. It is in this context that Caritas volunteers have the mystique of those who seek commitment to the poor, in the perspective of a just and egalitarian society.

Volunteers donate their time, their technical knowledge with dedication and joy. This gives life to the work of Caritas. They find in popular education the necessary force and instrument for the construction of the so-called fair, fraternal, supportive society, and defender of a sustainable planet.

Caritas volunteers:

- Are people and teams committed to engage in favour of people in situations of vulnerability and social exclusion;
- Are people who work in a joint effort, in communities where people really experience the difficulties of everyday life: coexist in solidarity, seeking unity, respecting and valuing differences; challenged for living relationships of equality, dialogue and goodwill;
- Are moved by faith (James 2: 14-26). They are pastoral agents who act with competence and spirituality, based on scientific knowledge and guided by the Spirit;
- Are people who work and encourage their group, using a liberating methodology;
- Are people who have compassion, at the root of their action: they feel what the other persons feel, they suffer with them and share the struggle for the quality of life using the possibilities that exist;
- Act in such a way that is marked by the practice of Jesus with the people, especially with the most impoverished;
- Nourish their faith, especially in liturgical celebrations with communities, in celebratory moments, in gatherings and discussions;
- Take an ecumenical position, open to coexistence with other cultures and religious sources and welcoming values and beliefs

that contribute to the dedication of life for the liberation of impoverished people;

- Are prophetic people committed and engaged in changing the culture of domination and the unjust structures of society;
- Assume a welcoming posture, listening, dialoguing, maintaining coherence between what they are and what they say;
- Are laymen, laywomen, people of all ages, including youth, with the mission to announce the Gospel of Jesus Christ, with freedom and autonomy, without falling into militancy, conscious to accomplish a mission entrusted to them by God;
- Are a driving force as animators of processes of organisation and mobilisation towards social transformation.

12. DOES CARITAS HAVE A SALARY POLICY?

There is no standardised salary policy in Caritas. The remuneration policy for Caritas staff is established in accordance with the context and circumstances in which each individual Caritas operates. However, the Article 10, paragraph 4 of the *Motu Proprio Intima Ecclesiae Natura* has given clear instruction and guidance in this regard, insisting on need to offer testimony of Christian simplicity when fixing salaries for Caritas personnel. It's recommended to the bishop to *"ensure that salaries and operational expenses, while respecting the demands of justice and a necessary level of professionalism, are in due proportion to analogous expenses of his diocesan curia"*.

13. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE CI MANAGEMENT STANDARDS?

The CI Management Standards describe good practices of governance, management, accountability and adherence to ethical codes considered essential for Caritas members. As Pope Francis said to all Caritas organisations: *'These instruments must now be applied to strengthen the transparency and credibility of Caritas. Let us remember that we are accountable to God, to the Church, to the donors and in particular, to the poor with whom the Lord*

identifies Himself. By serving them with humility, dedication, self-denial and professionalism, we promote the Church's mission of forming one human family, caring for creation.'

14. WHY SHOULD CARITAS COMPLY WITH "HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES"?

Church-related and faith-based organisations, including Caritas, play a central role in delivering humanitarian assistance and provide protection to those in need. Based on the values of charity, mercy and solidarity, religious orders have long provided services and refuge to the most vulnerable.

However, one of the major challenges Church and faith-based organisations are facing today is the *misperception*, by secular humanitarian organisations, of not being neutral and impartial. Also, they are often accused of proselytism and discrimination.

To address this misperception, Caritas has made great efforts to demonstrate its impartiality and neutrality by putting into practice its mission statement. It is clear that our help is offered to all those in need without any discrimination thus respecting the core Christian values that guide the 'Church's charitable activity'. These values have been expressed without ambiguity in the encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* of Pope Benedict XVI among others. *"Christian charity is first of all the simple response to immediate needs and specific situations... and Christian charitable activity must be independent of parties and ideologies and cannot be used as a means of engaging in what is considered (...) proselytism"* (cf. *Deus Caritas Est* n.31).

That is obviously in agreement with the humanitarian principles of humanity and impartiality, independence and political or ideological neutrality.

Caritas adheres to and is committed to promoting those humanitarian principles, especially since they are coherent with the Catholic Social Teaching that serves as the basis of Caritas' mission and action in the humanitarian field.

15. SHOULD A CARITAS ORGANISATION BE REGISTERED AS A NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION (NGO)? IS THIS OPTIONAL?

When a national Caritas organisation is registered as an NGO, it acquires a legal personality which is distinct from the Church. This legal distinction is very important in the sense that the Church cannot be held legally responsible for any wrong doing on the part of Caritas. Caritas and the Church are two distinct legal entities.

The Statutes of Caritas as an NGO should however state clearly that Caritas is a faith-based organisation acting within the Catholic Church structure. This ensures the Catholic identity of Caritas and at the same time ensures its own legal identity. Hence, the national Caritas enjoys a dual personality.

A national Caritas organisation, when registered as an NGO, is recognised as an intangible person having rights and obligations and it is represented by a board of directors. There are several advantages in connection with the legal and financial spheres. Such advantages include: limited liability; ease of fund transfer; additional credibility for the organisation; and the fact that the organisation has an existence of its own. As a result, the organisation can apply for funds without having to go through the Church structure.

As a registered organisation however, the national Caritas will have to submit returns to the relevant authorities. This ensures the financial transparency of the organisation and gives it additional credibility, which can of course be most useful.

Given the above, it is clear that, ideally, national Caritas organisations should be recognised juridically.

16. WHERE DOES CARITAS MONEY COME FROM AND HOW IS IT USED? CAN CARITAS ACCEPT ANY MONEY?

Financial resources make it possible for Caritas members to fulfill their mission. Caritas member organisations worldwide spend more

than Euro 7.2 billion per year on humanitarian and development programmes. Caritas members receive funding from multiple sources: the faithful (Church collections, direct donations, legacies, Lenten campaigns); governments; public collections and fundraising events (examples: concerts, fun runs); individuals, corporations, trusts and foundations; Church tax (Germany); international NGOs; multilateral organisations (European Union, World Bank, UNAIDS, WFP and more); Caritas partner organisations; and more.

Caritas members accept donations from a variety of sources but may reject a donation from a donor whose objectives/activities appear to be incompatible with Catholic social and moral teaching, or Caritas Internationalis' vision, mission and values (cf. *Motu Proprio Intima Ecclesiae Natura*).

17. WHY SHOULD CI MEMBERS PAY A STATUTORY FEE?

National Caritas organisations are members of the Caritas Internationalis confederation. As such, national Caritas organisations benefit from the worldwide network. They gain in credibility; they can partner with other members; they are part of a large network; etc. Without the existence of the CI confederation, each national Caritas would be totally isolated.

Funds are needed to animate the worldwide network of all Caritas organisations, provide support whenever needed, advocate for those in need, and intervene in the humanitarian field when there are natural and man-made emergencies. It is quite obvious that national Caritas organisations benefit from the fact that they belong to the confederation of which they are members. As such it is their duty to pay statutory fees, calculated on the financial capacity and means of respective members, so that the confederation may fulfil the mission entrusted to her by the members who are actually the owners of the confederation.

18. WHO SHOULD PRIMARILY SUPPORT THE PASTORAL AND SOCIAL WORK OF THE CHURCH, IN TERMS OF HUMAN, MATERIAL AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES?

The Code of Canon law 222 §1 insists on the role of the faithful in contributing to the financial sustainability of the Church. Each particular Church must work to mobilise and sensitise the faithful in this regards. Also, it must put in place structures and build up its capacity in resource mobilisation, income generating and management. It equally might be useful to build partnerships in the Universal Church and outside in order to use all possible opportunities to secure financial and material support to the integral mission of the Church : catechesis, liturgy, service of charity, with all that it takes in terms of training, infrastructures, logistic, etc.

With regards to Caritas in particular, it is first and foremost the social arm of the Church aiming at integral human development. Even if Caritas is a faith-based organisation, it has a specific mission carried out by attending to the poorest and the most needy, assisting in humanitarian emergencies and helping to spread charity and justice in the world in the light of the Gospel and of the teaching of the Catholic Church (CI Statutes, art.1.3). Donors are usually more motivated to provide financial support that will benefit the underprivileged rather than supporting strictly religious needs. Each particular Church must examine all means and ways to diversify the sources of funding for its pastoral and social work.

19. IS IT APPROPRIATE FOR CARITAS TO PUBLICISE ITS WORK?

It is important for the Church to make its work known within the Church and outside, by showing evidence of the changes it affects on the lives of individuals and communities. Of course there is no need for the Church to engage in any kind of propaganda about its work be it social or other. The problem is that the Church doesn't always invest in appropriate communication about what it does. The well-known Gospel statement says that when one gives alms, one's left hand must not know what one's right hand is doing... (Mt 6:3). However, the use of communication tools has become an imperative including for the purpose of evangelisation and they should be used without engaging in proselytism. Caritas humanitarian and developmental work must be well reported, if necessary through the media, but even more importantly within

the Church network in order to attract the support of donors, both individual and institutional.

20. HOW DOES CARITAS AVOID MISMANAGEMENT AND CORRUPT PRACTICES?

Avoiding mismanagement starts first and foremost with the recruitment of staff. Too often, recruitment is done in a haphazard way, based on totally irrational principles. Zero tolerance principles must be applied by CI members towards corruption and mismanagement. Appropriate governance is a tool to facilitate the management resources in our Caritas organisations.

This is covered in the CI Management Standards and Code of Conduct.

21. SHOULD ONE BE A CATHOLIC TO WORK IN CARITAS?

One does not have to be a Catholic to work for Caritas. What really matters is that he or she, whether a Catholic or not, adheres to the human values and principles that are promoted by the Catholic Church. He or she must also be aware of the fact that Caritas is an essential realisation of the mission of the Church and he or she must at least respect this.

THE PATRON SAINTS OF CARITAS



SAN MARTÍN DE PORRES

Martín was born in a very complicated social context. The conquistadors had reduced an entire population to slavery. Martín's father, Juan de Porras, a Spanish nobleman, belonged to the Order of Alcantara, and his mother, Ana Velázquez, was a free black Creole born in Panama. He was born in December 1579. His baptism certificate reveals all the drama unfolding around this infant and the state of inferiority he was born into in the eyes of the world. The

baptismal register of the Church of San Sebastián de Lima states: *"On Wednesday 9 December 1579, Martín, son of an unknown father and of Ana Velázquez, a free black woman, was baptised. The godfather and godmother were Juan de Bribiesca and Ana de Escarcena. Signed by Juan Antonio Polanco"*.

The young Martín used to kneel and pray every evening before the image of the Crucified Jesus and during the day he was inclined to assist other people with their misfortunes. From an early age he learnt the profession of barber surgeon, alongside his friends, Mateo Pastor, a pharmacist, and Marcelo de Rivera, a surgeon. He was 15 years old when his mother, full of emotion and humility, accompanied him to the monastery. At the age of 24, after nine years in the Order, he took up his profession as recorded in the monastery's register of professions: *"On 2 June 1603, Brother Martín de Porras, a mulatto and son of Juan de Porras, a native of Burgos, and Ana Velázquez, a free black woman, dedicated himself to this monastery for all the days of his life; he was born in this*



Caritas Centre in Zarqa, Jordan. Photo by Isabel Corthier /Caritas Belgium

city and swore obedience on this day for his entire life (...) Signed:
Brother Martín de Porras

At that time, the Rosario monastery housed around 200 religious, without taking into account the slaves, for whom there was a separate infirmary. Martín had to take care of all them. But his charity was not confined to the boundaries of his monastery's infirmary. The renown of this compassionate Samaritan soon spread throughout the entire city. As soon as he knew that someone needed relief and was in pain he went out and offered help, as promptly as he came to the assistance of his brother monks.

Martín built bridges between the three groups in colonial Lima: black, indigenous and Spanish people. The son of an unknown father turned into the spiritual father of many people. He always called black and indigenous people his "sons and daughters", and due to this filial love, he often ended up in situations in which he had to protect and defend the poor. Some upper-class people in Lima also had a profound respect for Martín. As his life neared its end he was doing good to everyone. He died on 3 November 1639.



MOTHER TERESA OF CALCUTTA

Mother Teresa was born Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu in Skopje, now part of Macedonia, on 26 August, 1910. Her family was of Albanian descent. At the age of eighteen she left her parental home in Skopje and joined the Sisters of Loreto, an Irish community of nuns with missions in India. After a few months' training in Dublin she was sent to India, where on 24 May, 1931, she took her initial vows as a nun and the perpetual ones

in 1937. From 1931 to 1948 Mother Teresa taught at St. Mary's High School in Calcutta, but the suffering and poverty she glimpsed outside the convent walls made such a deep impression on her that in 1948 she received permission from her superiors to leave the convent school and devote herself to working among the poorest of the poor in the slums of Calcutta. Although she had no funds, she depended on divine providence, and started an open-air school for slum children. Soon she was joined by voluntary helpers, and financial support was also forthcoming. This made it possible for her to extend the scope of her work.

On 7 October, 1950, Mother Teresa received permission from the Holy See to start her own order, "The Missionaries of Charity", whose primary task was to love and care for those persons nobody was prepared to look after. In 1965 the Society became an International Religious Family by a decree of Pope Paul VI.

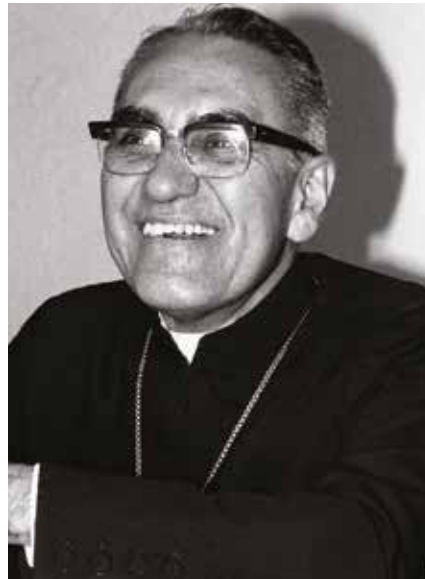
The Society of Missionaries has spread all over the world, including the former Soviet Union and Eastern European countries. They provide effective help to the poorest of the poor in a number of countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and they undertake relief work in the wake of natural catastrophes such as floods, epidemics, and famine, and for refugees. The order also has houses in North America, Europe and Australia, where they take care of the shut-ins, alcoholics, homeless, and AIDS sufferers.

The Missionaries of Charity throughout the world are aided and assisted by Co-Workers who became an official International Association on 29 March, 1969. By the 1990s there were over one million Co-Workers in more than 40 countries. Along with the Co-Workers, the lay Missionaries of Charity try to follow Mother Teresa's spirit and charism in their families.

Mother Teresa died on 5 September 1997. Two days later, John Paul II described her as follows: *"Present in memory is her minute face, marked by an existence lived at the service of the poorest, but always full of an inexorable inner energy: energy of the Christ's love. Missionary of charity: that was Mother Teresa, by name and in facts"*.

OSCAR ROMERO

Oscar Romero was Archbishop of San Salvador. He was assassinated on Monday 24 March, 1980 as he celebrated Mass in the chapel of the Divine Providence Cancer Hospital where he lived. 35 years later, he was declared a martyr of the Church, killed out of hatred of the faith, and was beatified on 23 May, 2015.



Born on 15 August, 1917 to a humble family in Ciudad Barrios in the Diocese of San Miguel, Oscar Arnulfo

Romero y Galdámez studied for the priesthood in Rome and was ordained in April 1942. He lived simply; he was a popular preacher with real compassion for the poor. He gave dedicated pastoral service in San Miguel for over two decades before becoming secretary to the Bishops' Conference and subsequently Auxiliary Bishop of San Salvador in 1970. There he gained a reputation as being unsympathetic to the new social justice thrust of the Latin American Church, he was critical of the clergy and the Base Christian Communities of the archdiocese who worked alongside the exploited rural poor, promoting social organisations, unions and land reform.

Three years as Bishop of Santiago de Maria from 1974 opened Romero's eyes as he witnessed the misery and hardship of the rural workers on the coffee plantations and the harsh repression they suffered at the hands of the security forces. In February 1977 he was appointed as Archbishop of San Salvador at a time when the country was plunged into civil conflict. Just weeks later his close friend, the Jesuit Fr. Rutilio Grande, was assassinated by a death squad. This was a turning point for Romero. He ordered that the following Sunday, 20 March, all churches of the diocese be closed

and all Masses cancelled. He celebrated a 'single Mass', attended by 100,000 people, in front of the Cathedral.

Over the next three years the conflict intensified with electoral fraud blocking peaceful change, and non-violent protests being met with army massacres and death squad killings. Through his weekly sermons broadcast from his pulpit, Archbishop Romero became the voice of the voiceless poor. In a society of cover-up and lies, he spoke the truth of what was happening; he denounced the killings, the torture and the disappearances of community leaders, catechists and priests; he demanded justice for the atrocities committed by the army and police and he set up legal aid projects and pastoral programmes to support the victims of the violence.

As armed groups emerged on the far left, civil war loomed.

Archbishop Romero, rejecting the violence from the left as well as from the right, appealed for peaceful solutions to his nation's crisis. He was vilified in the press, attacked and denounced to Rome by Catholics of the wealthy classes, harassed by the security forces and publicly opposed by several colleagues bishops. The death threats against him multiplied but he was resolute. In his homily of Sunday 23rd March, 1980 he called on the military: *"I beg you, I implore you, I order you in the name of God: Stop the repression!"*

The following day, at 6.26 pm on 24 March, 1980, a death squad marksman murdered him with a single bullet to his heart as he said Mass in the hospital chapel. His unswerving commitment to the poor brought about his martyrdom. In his life he was the voice of the voiceless and in his death he became the name of the nameless. His example has been an inspiration to millions across the world who pray to him as "San Romero de America".

PAPAL ENCYCLICALS AND OTHER PAPAL TEACHINGS ON THE SERVICE OF CHARITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

1. RERUM NOVARUM / Leo XIII
(On the Condition of Labor), 15 May, 1891
2. QUADRAGESIMO ANNO / Pius XI
(On the Reconstruction of the Social Order), 15 May, 1931
3. SUMMI PONTIFICATUS / Pius XII
(On the Unity of Human Society), 20 October, 1939
4. MATER ET MAGISTRA / John XXIII
(Christianity and Social Progress), 15 May, 1961
5. PACEMIN TERRIS / John XXIII (Peace on Earth), 11 April, 1963
6. POPULORUM PROGRESSIO / Paul VI
(The Development of Peoples) 26 March, 1967
7. OCTOGESIMA ADVENIENS / Paul VI
(A Call to Action) Apostolic letter, 14 May, 1971
8. EVANGELII NUNTIANDI / Paul VI
(Evangelization in the Modern World)
Apostolic Exhortation, 8 December, 1975
9. REDEMPTORIS HOMINIS / John Paul II
(On Redemption and the Dignity of the Human Race),
4 March, 1979
10. DIVES IN MISERICORDIA / John Paul II
(On the Mercy of God), 30 November, 1980
11. LABOREM EXERCENS / John Paul II
(On Human Work), 14 September, 1981
12. FAMILIARIS CONSORTIO / John Paul II
(On the Family), 15 December, 1981
13. SOLLICITUDO REI SOCIALIS / John Paul II
(On the Social Concerns of the Church), 30 December, 1987
14. CENTESIMUS ANNUS / John Paul II
(On the Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum),
1 May, 1991

15. NOVO MILLENIO INEUNTE / John Paul II
(At the Close of the Great Jubilee of 2000), 6 January, 2001
16. DEUS CARITAS EST / Benedict XVI
(On God's Love), 25 December, 2005
17. CARITAS IN VERITATE / Benedict XVI
(On Charity in Truth), 29 June, 2009
18. INTIMA ECCLESIAE NATURA / Benedict XVI
(On the Service of Charity) Motu Proprio, 10 December, 2012
19. EVANGELII GAUDIUM / Pope Francis
(On the Joy of the Gospel)
Apostolic Exhortation, 24 November, 2013
20. LAUDATO SI / Pope Francis
(On Care of our Common Home), 24 May, 2015

CONCILIAR AND SYNODAL TEACHINGS

1. GAUDIUM ET SPES / Vatican Council II
(The Church in the Modern World); 7 December, 1965
2. DIGNITATIS HUMANAЕ / Vatican Council II
(Declaration on Religious Freedom) 7 December, 1965
3. JUSTICE IN THE WORLD
(Statement of the Synod of Bishops Second General Assembly)
30 November, 1971

