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Statement Concerning 2009 ShareLife Allocations to the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace and to the Pastoral Mission Fund.

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The time has come to make the decision concerning the allocation of this year's ShareLife funds to the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace and to the Pastoral Mission Fund.

For over 40 years Canadian Catholics have promoted social justice through the work of Development and Peace, which engages in social justice education work in Canada, and which supports various social justice projects in other countries. It also serves to channel emergency disaster relief to foreign lands. The Archdiocese of Toronto resolutely supports the mission of Development and Peace.

Although all of its activities are ultimately based on the call of Jesus to help those who suffer, Development and Peace does not engage in explicit works of evangelization. Because of this, in 1982 Cardinal Carter established the Pastoral Mission Fund, to assist missionary Sisters and Priests with projects directly related to evangelization.

In 2008, the Pastoral Mission Fund supported 384 projects in 28 countries: 206 in Asia, 151 in Africa, 26 in the Americas, and 1 in Oceania. To qualify for funding by the Pastoral Mission Fund, these initiatives must be endorsed in writing by the local bishops in these areas, and therefore we may have confidence that the important work that we support is being carried out by organizations whose activities are all in complete conformity with the principles of our faith. A similar process is used by Catholic Missions in Canada.

In the Archdiocese of Toronto, both the Pastoral Mission Fund and Development and Peace are funded through allocations from ShareLife, which was established by Archbishop Pocock in 1976 because Catholic organizations could not in conscience join together with any organization that goes against Gospel principles, specifically those related to the sanctity of life.

Funds raised through ShareLife must always be used in a way that respects the principle upon which ShareLife was founded.

In 2008, \$1,325,000 was allocated to the Pastoral Mission Fund, and \$1,125,000 to Development and Peace.

When any organization has been in operation for over 40 years, it makes good sense to undertake a thorough review of how it is fulfilling its mission, and how it is responding to current needs. In the case of Development and Peace, such a review is all the more opportune since the recent controversy regarding the way it funds organizations operating social justice projects in other countries has also surfaced some legitimate questions. Even acrimonious controversy can be fruitful if, always acknowledging the good intentions of others, we make use of it to bring about improvement.

In order that Development and Peace may flourish, in this coming year there needs to be a comprehensive review of the organization, including its mandate, its governance and organizational structure, its policies and protocols related to the funding of projects, and the instruments of communication linking Development and Peace and the Canadian bishops. The recommendations of the delegation sent to Mexico to examine a sample of the projects of Development and Peace provide valuable insights that would be helpful in such a review.

A thorough review, if it is acted on, can be the foundation for a renewal and strengthening of Development and Peace. That is what we all want.

I would suggest two principles that should govern the way in which Development and Peace operates in funding projects in foreign lands:

- 1) It is not enough to examine the suitability of individual projects. The organizations that operate the projects must also be in harmony with the principles of our Catholic faith. If they are not, then there are plenty of other worthy projects that are operated by organizations which we can in good conscience support, and funding should go to them.
- 2) We must always act in concert with the local bishops who are responsible for the Church in distant lands. This is required by natural courtesy, and also by the way the Church is structured. The bishops on the scene are also the ones who can verify that organizations in their country are appropriate partners, and are not in any way supporting anything contrary to our faith. Projects which we fund need to be in some way approved by the local bishop or the bishops' conference.

It is vital that this coming year be one in which Development and Peace experiences profound renewal, and the depth of that renewal will determine its future.

For 2009, we will again be allocating \$1,325,000 to the Pastoral Mission Fund. We will set aside \$1,125,000, which will be available for projects of Development and Peace which are operated by organizations endorsed by local bishops. Any funds which have not been expended will be re-allocated to the Pastoral Mission Fund.

Future ShareLife funding for Development and Peace will depend upon our assessment of the degree to which the issues that concern us have been resolved.

There can be no real conflict between zeal for social justice and zeal for the sanctity of life. Both are fundamental to the Gospel of Christ, and both must animate His disciples. They are as closely related as charity and truth, and as we seek to be faithful to our common mission as disciples we can all profit by meditating on the most recent encyclical letter of Pope Benedict, which guides us on the path ahead.

+ Thomas Collins

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