

1st October 2021

Dear Archbishops, Bishop, Monsignors, Priests, Religious, Deacons, Diocesan Caritas Coordinators and all People of God:

re: Second Caritas Day in South Africa and the Fifth World Day of the Poor
14 November 2021 (Thirty Third Sunday in Ordinary Time)

“The poor you will always have with you” (Mk 14:7)


This is the theme Pope Francis has declared for the Fifth World Day of the Poor for 2021. The same day will also be our Second Caritas Day in South Africa. In his message, His Holiness states that even though the poor will be with us always, it “should not make us indifferent, but summon us instead to a **mutual sharing** of life that does not allow proxies”. It requires from us a deeper response than an occasional giving of alms. More specifically he asserts that it requires a **relationship** with the poor - a Communion - that is based on equality, love and reciprocity. This is love in its purest sense - this is Caritas.

One thing the Covid-19 pandemic and the recent experiences of unrest and looting in some parts of South Africa has highlighted, is that we need each other. We are not meant to be in lockdown or in isolation or living in fear or deprived in any way. This is not who God made any one of us to be or how He wants us to feel. Therefore, if we want to make any real and lasting impact there has to be a personal acknowledgement that when one of my brothers or sisters is suffering or poor, than so am I. There is no us and them, there is only one! We are all one, “one Body in Christ” (Romans 12:5).

We encourage you to make this Fifth World Day of the Poor more meaningful, personal and enduring for your Diocese and Parish and your Organisations. To assist you in this regard, Caritas South Africa has once again prepared a “Liturgy Kit” (Poster, Suggestions for Eucharistic Celebration and the Message from Pope Francis) for use and distribution to all Parishes, Sodalities and Catholic organisations. Let us together make this day meaningful and memorable of Caritas in South Africa.

In closing I want to encourage you with the words from a Hymn,
“Ubi Caritas et amor, Deus ibi est” - “Where Charity and love are, God is there”.

Yours in the love and service of Christ,



+Wilfrid Cardinal Napier OFM
President of Caritas South Africa