



Office of the Auxiliary Bishop

22 September 2015

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Re: Collection for Syrian Refugees

In response to the escalating crisis of Syrian refugees, Archbishop Richard W. Smith is asking all parishes of the Archdiocese to take up a collection aimed at easing the misery of our suffering brothers and sisters.

The collection is part of an unprecedented joint appeal to Catholics across the country, involving the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB), the Canadian Organization for Development and Peace (D&P), the Catholic Near East Welfare Association Canada (CNEWA), and Aid to the Church in Need Canada (ACN).

We are asking parishes to hold this collection at all Masses on the weekend of **October 18**. Proceeds will be divided among the three charities actively working to assist the Syrian refugees: Development and Peace, the Catholic Near East Welfare Association, and Aid to the Church in Need.

To help immediately, individuals can make direct donations to these Catholic organizations. Please note that to qualify for matching government funds, any donations made by cheque must be clearly labelled "Refugee/Syria Crisis."

- **Development and Peace** supports Caritas partners providing humanitarian relief to Syrian refugees. To donate, visit www.devp.org/en/donate, call 1-888-234-8533, or send a cheque to D&P at 1425 René-Lévesque Blvd. W., 3rd Floor, Montreal, QC, H3G 1T7.
- **Catholic Near East Welfare Association Canada** supplies food, shelter, water, medical supplies and other essentials to impoverished families in the Middle East. To donate, visit www.cnewa.ca, call 1-866-322-4441, or mail a cheque to CNEWA Canada, 1247 Kilborn Place, Ottawa, ON K1H 6K9.
- **Aid to the Church in Need (Canada)** helps with basic needs and pastoral care in refugee camps, displaced persons camps and various dioceses. To donate, visit: www.acn-aed-ca.org or call 1-800-585-6333, or mail a cheque to ACN at Postal Box 670, Station H, Montréal, QC H3G 2M6.

The Archdiocese of Edmonton, through the services of Catholic Social Services, also has an ongoing refugee sponsorship program. At least 17 parishes are currently committed to sponsoring refugees to come to Canada.

I am always moved by the generosity of our people. But sadly, the need for our help has only grown. I encourage everyone to do what they can, through financial support, volunteer action, and prayer.

It is also important for all Catholics to urge the Canadian government to do everything it can to improve the situation of the refugees, and to streamline its refugee sponsorship application process. Above all, I encourage you to pray for the Syrian people and to pray for peace.

May the Lord of Mercy bless you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a small cross-like symbol followed by a stylized, cursive name.

✠ Gregory J. Bittman

Auxiliary Bishop of Edmonton