

Vancouver Catholics raise \$318,000 for Syria relief

Parishes across Canada collect more than \$1.8 million for food, shelter

VANCOUVER (Oct. 24, 2013) - Catholics across the Archdiocese of Vancouver have donated \$318,000 that will go toward health services, sanitation and shelter for Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan.

The money was donated following an appeal from the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. Development and Peace works with Caritas Lebanon, Caritas Jordan and other local organizations in Syria and has been supporting humanitarian aid for those affected since the beginning of the three-year-long crisis. More than two million refugees have fled to neighbouring countries and there are an estimated five million displaced people within Syria itself.

Across the country, Catholics donated more than \$1.8 million. With support from the federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada will be providing \$5.4 million in humanitarian aid to victims of the crisis in Syria.

Evelyn Vollet, director of the Archdiocese of Vancouver's Office of Service and Justice, which coordinated the local collection, thanked parishioners for their generosity. "With the onset of winter, these funds will arrive just in time to help ease the harsh living conditions affecting millions of men, women and children."

With few signs of the crisis ending, Development and Peace will continue to support those affected with funds raised through its appeal.

"This is one of the worst refugee and humanitarian crises happening in the world today, and thanks to the generosity and solidarity of all those who contributed, we can provide critical services to all those impacted by the violence and insecurity Syria," said Michael Casey, Executive Director of Development and Peace.

Development and Peace is continuing to accept donations for relief efforts in the region. Donations can be made by telephone (1 888 664-3387), or on its website at devp.org.

More information: Khoudia Ndiaye, D&P Communications Officer
514 257-8711 ext. 318 ndiaye.khoudia@devp.org

Paul Schratz, Archdiocese of Vancouver Communications Director
604-683-0281 (cell) 604-505-9411 pschratz@rcav.org