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2026

Christmas Appeal

"Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice."

(Psalm 96:11)

Dear <formal or informal salutation>,

This beautiful, evocative verse tells us that the birth of Jesus was a momentous event celebrated by all of God's creation. His humble arrival as a baby born in a manger brought good news to the world.

Psalm 96:11 illustrates how God is present in each of us and in our natural environment. In his encyclical *Laudato si', mi Signore*, Pope Francis reinforces this interconnectedness. Human life, said Pope Francis, "is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, our neighbour, and with the earth itself."

Yet for me Psalm 96:11 stands as a challenge to be fulfilled than a reality to be celebrated. In September, I returned from a trip to Haiti, where I met people living in extreme poverty, and those forced to flee by violence. They lack the most basic necessities and struggle every day just to survive. This reality was heart-wrenching.



Fe y Alegría

Witnessing such deep suffering, makes the intertwined relationships with God, our neighbours and the Earth more of a call, than a statement about how things are. During my 23 years as Executive Director at Canadian Jesuits International (CJI), I have witnessed the devastating impact of injustice, inequality, and unsustainable development models that prioritize profit over people and nature. Our Jesuit partners in the Global South accompany people on the margins of society who are often deprived of their dignity: people who have been denied their human rights; have been forcibly displaced by war, conflict, extractive activities, or the climate crisis; and lack access to education, health care, and jobs.

This reality is a far cry from Pope Francis' emphasis that "the gift of the earth with its fruits belongs to everyone. Those who tilled and kept the land were obliged to share its fruits, especially with the poor, with widows, orphans, and foreigners in their midst."

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Therefore, he adds, "A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings."

As we prepare for Christmas, my hope rests on this call.

In Haiti, we witnessed tenderness and compassion at a Fe y Alegria school, which provides quality education and an oasis of beauty, and hope for many children living in extreme poverty.

I witnessed compassion at the Jesuit Service for Migrants-Haiti reception centre, where the night before, colleagues had welcomed migrants, including children, who had been forcibly deported from the Dominican Republic; they gave them food, a place to sleep, and legal advice to help them decide the next move.

In the Dominican Republic, we witnessed concern when we visited a community that has been fighting against a Canadian gold mining company for years. The company's activities have devastated the community's land, water supply, and livelihood. Yet they have not given up their fight for justice, despite the threats and intimidation.

Tenderness, compassion, and concern are rooted in the struggle for peace, justice, and human rights. For some of our partners this sometimes means paying with their lives, as we have seen in Honduras, the Amazon, India and in so many other forgotten places.

My hope stems from having witnessed the tenacious commitment of our partners, the people, and communities they work with, and you, our supporters, and friends. You have embraced CJI's mission to love and serve others, particularly those who are yearning for peace and advocating for social justice. Your actions and the courage of your conviction that a just world is possible have truly inspired me and everyone at CJI.

I am now preparing to leave CJI with a joyful heart, knowing that thanks to your ongoing efforts, God's promise will be fulfilled, the heavens will be glad, and the earth will rejoice. This is our mission and the basis of our hope.

May you and your loved ones have a blessed Christmas.



Jenny Cafiso
Executive Director

LEAVE A **LASTING LEGACY** OF LOVE AND SERVICE!

Include CJI in your **planned giving**.

We can send information or discuss options with you.

- **Call CJI today** at 1.800.448.2148
- **Email** cji@jesuits.ca

❑ Please send me information about legacy giving.
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NAME

PHONE or EMAIL

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