

October 28th 2020

Dear Archbishops, Bishops, Monsignors, Priest, Religious, Deacons, Diocesan Caritas Coordinators and all People of God:

**Subject: 1st Caritas Day in South Africa and the World Day of the Poor
15th November 2020 (33rd Sunday of Ordinary Time)**

This year the Church celebrates the 4th **World Day of the Poor** as declared by Pope Francis in His Apostolic Letter, *Misericordia et Misera* in 2016. The Pope declared that “**World Day of the Poor**” be celebrated every year on the 33rd Sunday of Ordinary Time. Pope Francis presents the theme for 2020 as “**Stretch forth your hand to the poor**” (Sir 7:32) (attached copy of His Holiness Message).

To mark the World Day of the Poor in our region, the SACBC Admin Board has decided that this day be celebrated as Caritas Day in South Africa. On the 15th November 2020, we shall therefore celebrate the 1st Caritas Day in South Africa and the World Day of the Poor. It means that all Caritas (National, Diocesan and Parishes) will take this opportunity to pray, give awareness on Caritas and if there is any possibility to make fundraising to assist the needs of Diocesan office.

Caritas South Africa National Office has prepared a “Liturgy Kit” (Poster, suggestions for Eucharistic Celebration and the Message of Pope Francis) which will be sent to all Archbishops, Bishops and Caritas Coordinators so that it may be distributed to all Parish Pastoral Councils and sodalities.

The 1st Caritas Day in South Africa takes place at the time when the world is engulfed in the Covid-19 pandemic, which has taken many lives and continues to devastate even more families. The measures adopted to stop the spread of the Coronavirus have caused dire economic consequences worldwide causing thousands of breadwinners to lose their jobs. According to government statistics, more than 3 million people in our country have lost their jobs. The truth is that even before the pandemic many families were struggling with soul-sapping unemployment. Another frightening fact that Covid-19 has exposed is that the already enormous gap between rich and poor is getting daily larger, especially with the theft of funds set aside for relief for the poor and needy.

Building on the message of His Holiness, Pope Francis, we propose making “**Caritas is Serving the Poor**” the slogan for our 1st Caritas South Africa Day. Please motivate all our communities to make **Caritas South Africa Day** special by committing ourselves to being even more compassionate as we all reach out to serve our underprivileged brothers and sisters with love, sharing with the poor and needy because we are all members of the body of Christ (Romans 12:5).

Thanking you in advance.

Yours Sincerely in Christ,



+ Wilfrid Cardinal Napier OFM
President of Caritas South Africa