Discussion guide:

Connecting the *Is Canada on Track for Justice?* campaign with your community

This guide will help you organize a discussion group in your church, school, or community as part of Development and Peace — Caritas Canada (DPCC)'s 2026 fall campaign, ***Is Canada on Track for Justice?*** Discussion groups can help communities can talk together about their faith and deepen their understanding of solidarity.

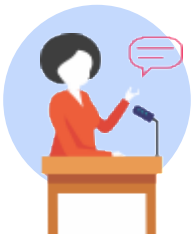
OBJECTIVES

- Encourage community members to consider how Christian faith and Catholic Social Teaching (CST) call us to engage in the world beyond the borders of our country.
- Consider the state of international aid and the gap between the dire needs in the world today and the actions of wealthy countries. How does our faith call us to act in this context?
- Recruit new members to support DPCC's mission!

APPROACH

Depending on your time, style and preference, you might consider a few different structures to get people talking, like:

Workshop and discussion



- Organize and host your own workshop in your parish, school, or community. Borrow a PowerPoint from your animator and change it to suit your needs; present and discuss with attendees.
- Get some friends or community members together. Choose an activity from our database. *CST Tree*, *Cookie Mining*, and the *Solidarity Circle* all get people talking about values.

Informal conversation

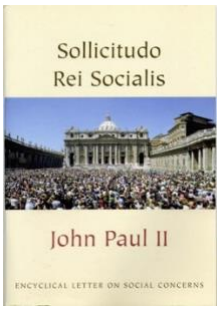
- You might be most comfortable hosting a conversation over tea and snacks.
- Bring printed passages from papal encyclicals about the values of *Solidarity* and the *Common good* (see below), or others from our CST principles.
- Reflect together on the passages and how they encourage us to act individually and societally. You could structure the conversation with discussion questions (see page 2).

Book club or movie night

- Host a movie night or cover a book over several sessions (examples on pages 3 to 5).
- Invite others into an encounter with stories that can spark greater action.

TWO CORE CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHINGS:

Solidarity



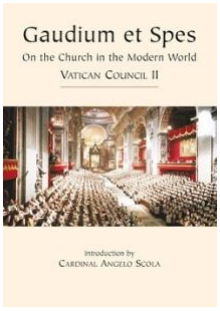
Solidarity "is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all."

— **Saint John Paul II**, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 38

Discussion Questions

1. What is a concrete example of "a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress" St. John Paul II discusses? How would a response of solidarity differ?
2. What would it mean for people in Canada to commit ourselves to the global common good?
3. How does Development and Peace – Caritas Canada help Canadians express solidarity?

Common Good



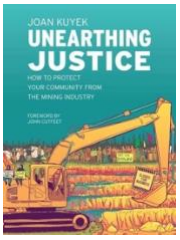
"God intended the Earth with everything contained in it for the use of all human beings and peoples. Thus, under the leadership of justice and in the company of charity, created goods should be in abundance for all in like manner."

— **Second Vatican Council**, *Gaudium et Spes,* 69

Discussion Questions

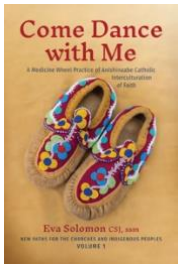
1. If God created everything for the use of all people, why are there so many people in the world who don't have access to basic needs, like food, healthcare, or housing? What structural barriers prevent people from leading a dignified life?
2. What can we do in Canada to encourage our country to pursue the leadership of justice, which would mean making sure all people in the world can enjoy creation in abundance?
3. This fall, Development and Peace – Caritas Canada is asking the question: is Canada on track for justice? While the global situation is challenging, is Canada moving in a direction toward the global common good? What causes concern? What gives you hope?

Books[1]



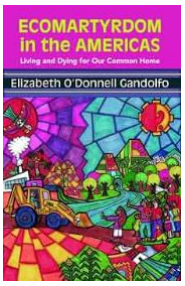
Unearthing Justice: How to Protect Your Community from the Mining Industry
Joan Kuyek (Fernwood, 2019) (available in Spanish and Portuguese)

At DPCC, we often hear from our partners about the abuses of the mining industry. But how does the industry work? Joan Kuyek, a founder of MiningWatch, explains everything from the basics of what a mine looks like to how communities are organizing to resist abuse in the North and South.



Come Dance with Me
Eva Solomon (2022) (available in French)

For many of us at DPCC, Eva Solomon, a Sister of St. Joseph and Anishinaabe elder, is a familiar name. Her book invites readers into her own journey of reconciliation, especially based on her work in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

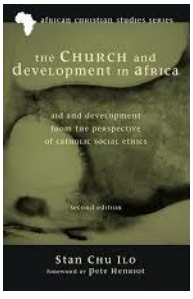


Ecomartyrdom in the Americas: Living and Dying in Our Common Home
Elizabeth O'Donnell Gandolfo (Orbis, 2023)

A challenging look at the people willing to give their lives for the sake of creation and their communities across Latin America. Gandolfo argues for real solidarity between the North and South as individuals put their lives on the line. She also features the story of land defenders in Guapinol, Honduras, the community at the center of our 2024 *Reaping Our Rights* campaign.

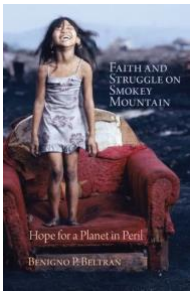
A Palestinian Theology of Liberation: The Bible, Justice, and the Palestine-Israel Conflict
Naim Stifan Ateek (Orbis, 2017)

Palestine is no longer daily news, yet the struggle for justice and peace continues. That struggle started long before 2023, however. Anglican priest and Palestinian Naim Stifan Ateek introduces the history of the conflict and how Christians can contribute to a peaceful future in the region.



The Church and Development in Africa: Aid and Development from the Perspective of Catholic Social Ethics
Stan Chu Ilo (Pickwick, 2014)

How can Catholic Social Teaching help guide true solidarity with people living in the many different countries across the continent of Africa? Stan Chu Ilo looks to Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* to ground an approach to aid and development.



Faith and Struggle on Smokey Mountain: Hope for a Planet in Peril
Benigno P. Beltran (Orbis, 2012)

In Manila, Philippines, communities of scavengers make their living in the waste of a gigantic garbage dump called Smokey Mountain. Yet Fr. Beltran, who ministered there, explains amid the trash and poverty there is an abundance of hope, joy, and solidarity, with lessons for all of us.

[1] DPCC does not endorse all views in these books; we invite members to read openly and with discernment.

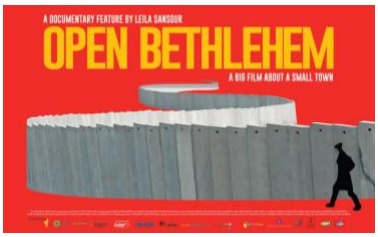
Films[2]

Brazil: Resist to Exist (20-minute documentary to be released at the end of September 2026; shorter 8-minute version available on YouTube)

Directed by DPCC, this short documentary profiles communities in Brazil affected by industrial agriculture, mining, and the Carajás Railroad. With courage, they are resisting to continue living on their lands with the support of our partner ***Justiça nos Trilhos***. *Take this opportunity to organize a film discussion following a screening!*

The Letter: A Message for our Earth (Documentary, 2022 | Watch on YouTube)

Featuring Pope Francis and climate activists around the world, this inspiring documentary shows the importance and relevance of *Laudato Si'*, one of the most important papal encyclicals of our time.

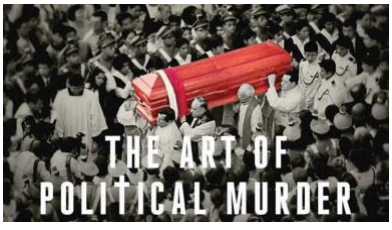


Open Bethlehem (Documentary, 2014 | Watch online)

Sponsored by DPCC, this documentary tells the story of Leila Sansour, a Palestinian woman born in Bethlehem who returns to tell the story of her people. An intimate look into the reality of a town Christians sing about every year but rarely discover today, this film helps show the aspirations of the people of Palestine for a peaceful life. *Content warning: occupation, militarization.*

No Other Land (Documentary, 2024 | Trailer with English subtitles)

An internationally acclaimed film and winner of the 2025 Oscar for Best Documentary, this documentary—directed by an Israeli-Palestinian collective—documents the demolitions of Palestinian villages in the occupied West Bank and the resistance of their residents. Basel Adra, a young Palestinian activist, befriends Yuval, an Israeli journalist who helps him in his struggle. Since the film's release, its creators have reported facing intimidation, arrests, and violence. *Warning: contains violence, forced displacement, trauma, grief, and distress.*



The Art of Political Murder (Documentary, 2020 | trailer)

In 1988, Guatemalan Bishop Juan Gerardi was found killed after a human rights office sponsored by his diocese published a damning report on abuses in the country. Based on a 2007 book by Francisco Goldman, the film follows the attempt to bring Bishop Gerardi's killers to trial. Consider organizing a book club before screening the film to go deeper! *Content warning: graphic images and descriptions of violence.*

[2] DPCC does not endorse all views in these films; we invite members to watch openly and with discernment.

Monsenor: The Last Journey of Oscar Romero (Documentary, 2010, in Spanish with subtitles)
Watch on Kanopy

This documentary tells the story of St. Oscar Romero, the famous Archbishop of San Salvador slain by the repressive government of El Salvador in 1980. Interviewing laypeople, priests, and others who knew him, it also features footage of St. Romero's courageous speeches. *Content warning: graphic images and descriptions of violence*.

Babette's Feast (drama, 1987, in Danish with subtitles)

In this film about hospitality, generosity, and forgiveness, a mysterious woman from France appears as a cook for a group of sisters in Denmark. Can one meal heal the growing divisions in her small community? Pope Francis called it his favorite film.