



## **Everyone with Haiti**

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

The people of Haiti have been suffering a lot for a long time. In recent weeks the social and humanitarian situation has become extremely worse. We are aware that it is the result of multiple causes and a complex history, but we cannot stop becoming neighbours.

In this season of Lent, the face of the suffering Christ is in the more than 3 million children in need of humanitarian aid, in the 362,000 internally displaced persons, in more than half of the population living below the poverty line and with a life expectancy that barely exceeds 64 years old; in those who lost their family and friends victims of violence; in the women who suffer every day the trampling of their basic rights and in those who do not have the minimum conditions to live with dignity.

Where's your brother? (Gen 4:9), God challenges us today. We can never remain indifferent to the suffering of an entire people that is part of our Latin American and Caribbean people. It's part of our history. It's part of our Church.

We know that the solution is not directly in our hands and that it needs the courage and determination of men and women with national and international decision-making power. However, we are convinced of the strength and power of prayer, which also brings us closer and expresses our solidarity with the Haitian people.

That is why we are inviting you to dedicate a day of prayer for the people of Haiti on 22 March. That day is still celebrated in many communities as "Friday of Sorrows" or "Mary at the Foot of the Cross". It is the Virgin who associates herself with the sorrows of her Son. It is Mary who grieving today for her Son in the face of the Haitian people crucified by misery and violence. To her, Mother of tenderness and mercy, we wish to ask her intercession so that the Lord may smooth the paths, dispose the hearts, move the wills, so that our brothers and sisters may soon enjoy a full Life.

That day may our Lenten practices be directed with this intention, but it is also important to make this situation visible to draw attention to this seriousness and drama. That is why we propose to carry out some gesture, moment, or concrete community action. We also invite other Christian and religious communities to join in prayer, as well as non-believers to join in with their sentiments.

Let us join the cry of the Haitian people so that this voice may be heard on earth and in heaven, trusting in God's mercy and compassion for his children.

Everyone with Haiti.

***Latin American Episcopal Council - CELAM***

***Latin American Confederation of Religious – CLAR***

***Caritas Latin America and the Caribbean***