

A great man
is no more



Carl Hétu

1959-2026

Carl Hétu (1959–2026) dedicated more than three decades of his life to advancing international solidarity, peacebuilding, and humanitarian outreach through two major Catholic organizations: Development and Peace – Caritas Canada and the Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA) Canada.

His career was marked by vision, compassion, and a deep commitment to the dignity of vulnerable communities around the world.

He began his work with Development and Peace in 1990, joining the organization as an animator responsible for mobilizing Catholic communities across Ontario. Over the next 14 years, he became a key figure in strengthening the movement's grassroots presence. He trained volunteers, built strong relationships with clergy and parish groups, and helped Canadians understand the realities of global injustice. His leadership extended beyond Canada: he led a solidarity trip to Peru and represented Development and Peace on a fact finding mission to Colombia, experiences that shaped his understanding of the structural causes of poverty and conflict. These encounters deepened his conviction that solidarity must be rooted in listening, partnership, and long term commitment.

In 2004, he was appointed the founding National Director of CNEWA Canada, a role he would hold for 18 years. Tasked with establishing the Canadian office from the ground up, he built a national presence for the organization, reorganizing its operations and expanding its development programs. Under his leadership, CNEWA Canada became a vital bridge between Canadian donors and

communities in the Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe, and India. He travelled extensively to regions affected by war, displacement, and religious persecution, advocating for Christians and other vulnerable groups. He undertook more than 30 mission journeys, visiting refugee camps, schools, hospitals, and parishes, always emphasizing the importance of hope and human dignity. His ability to communicate the stories of suffering communities inspired generosity across Canada and strengthened CNEWA's international partnerships.

In February 2022, after nearly two decades with CNEWA, he returned to Development and Peace as Executive Director. His return marked a period of renewed energy and strategic clarity. He worked to reinforce the organization's relationship with the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, expanded its advocacy and philanthropic development efforts, and invested in youth engagement. One of his notable initiatives was the creation of a youth ambassadors program designed to form a new generation of leaders committed to global justice. His leadership style combined pragmatism with a deep pastoral sensitivity, earning him respect across the Canadian Church and the international Caritas network.

Illness forced him to step back from his duties in 2024, but his influence continued to shape the organization. Carl Hétu is remembered as a man of integrity, faith, and unwavering dedication to the Church's mission of justice and peace. His legacy lives on in the countless communities he supported and in the many people he inspired to believe in a more compassionate and equitable world.

www.devpo.org
www.cnewa.org/ca

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