

## Decree convening the Caritas strategic planning process

“The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common. With great power the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great favor was accorded them all. There was no needy person among them, for those who owned property or houses would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, and put them at the feet of the apostles, and they were distributed to each according to need.” (Act 4:32-35)

This is how the book of the Acts of the Apostles summarizes the life of the early church. Communion, Prayer, Witness, Sharing of Goods. This is also one of the many texts that explain the meaning and mission of Caritas within the Church: to make this a reality here and now. The service of Charity (CARITAS) is not only a moral or ethical duty that we have as believers: it is the witness and the fruit of the Holy Spirit at work in the midst of the Community of Believers. It is the Spirit who makes it a reality today, in 2025, as he did in the time of the Apostles, and here, in Laayoune and Dakhla, as he did in Jerusalem.

Our little church wants to be like the apostolic church: fraternal and servant. It wants to be like Jesus, who “did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mk 10:45). Like Jesus, we want to be in the midst of this people “as the one who serves” (cf. Lk 22:27).

For this reason, and although for some years now we have had an excellent Caritas team in the Prefecture, Caritas is not only the group of volunteers and/or hired people who work in the institution: Caritas is the Church. Caritas is all of us. True, the drama of migration has made us take faster steps to organize the institution, provide it with legal recognition and seek resources. The arrival of religious congregations (Jesuits and *Esclavas de la Inmaculada Niña*, together with the already present Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate), of volunteers from inside and outside the Prefecture, has been a gift from God. It has not only made our help to the poor more efficient and professional, it has made our Church more alive. Because, I repeat, Caritas is much more than helping our suffering brothers and sisters: Caritas is the LOVE of God expressed as a testimony of the presence of the Risen Lord, in our midst, “as the one who serves”.

Caritas already provides a beautiful service by accompanying so many people to medical-health services, providing spaces in which to alleviate their fears, helping them to carry out administrative procedures and empowering their capacity to undertake and work. But the time has come for Caritas to step forward: it must formulate its mission, vision and values, proposing objectives to be met, expressing the results it intends to achieve, the indicators of its degree of fulfillment and the activities through which to achieve them. It is something to foresee for a reasonable period of three years, ranging from January 1, 2026, to December 31, 2028.


This strategic planning process involves the Caritas team first and foremost: it is a process in which it must bring together its acquired experience, its professional competence and its sense of mission. It is open to those who were part of the team and are still attentive to its evolution, as well as to other actors of the society in Laayoune and Dakhla. It is important for all members of the parish communities to participate in the process when the Caritas team reports on the

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progress of its work, contributing echoes, observations, questions, proposals... each to the best of his or her knowledge and experience.

For all this I invite all of you, Christians of Laayoune and Dakhla, under the direction and effort of the members of Caritas, to offer your collaboration, your prayer and your reflection on this path of discernment. This whole process coincides with our Jubilee pilgrimage: We are pilgrims of Hope. What a beautiful vocation! To offer hope to this world so in need of a reason to hope. We know, as the Jubilee logo shows, that our Hope, our Anchor, is Christ: the one and only Savior. May He, and the Virgin Mary, guide us in this process of discernment.

Done in Laayoune, January 25th 2025, feast of the conversion of Saint Paul.

The image shows a handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be 'M. León Dorado', written over a circular official seal. The seal is also in blue ink and contains the text 'PREFECTURA APOSTOLICA DE LAAYOUNE-SAHARA' around the perimeter. In the center of the seal, there is a sunburst design and the Latin motto 'IN BEATISSIMO PAUPERISSIMO IHSU'.

Signed: Mario León Dorado OMI,  
Apostolic Prefect of Laayoune-Sahara.