

**A letter for SCiAF Sunday from Bishop Brian McGhee of Argyll & the Isles,
Bishop President of SCiAF**



My dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

I write on this Fourth Sunday of Lent – on behalf of all the Bishops of Scotland – to thank you for your continued support of the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund, our Church's relief and development charity.

It is an honour, as Bishop President of SCiAF in our 60th Anniversary Year, to be writing this letter during the Jubilee – a Year when Our Holy Father asks that we journey in hope together.

Hope is something that we all need and something that we can, together, offer to others too. We are called to respond to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor, and as someone who has seen this in action with SCiAF's partners, I can assure you that the global Catholic Church is doing exactly that. But we must continue. Serving the poor is one of the ways that we live out our faith. It is only with your support in prayer, in volunteering time, and through generous donations, that the work of SCiAF is possible.

This year's WEE BOX Lenten Appeal brings our attention to the country of Colombia, and SCiAF's work of peacebuilding. In Colombia, violence lurks around every corner. Families are turfed from their homes, children are forced into illegal activities, and armed gangs use fear to control large parts of the country. People living in the poorest region of Chocó are particularly at risk. SCiAF's brave local partners stand alongside those in Chocó, despite immense danger to themselves. They are there when communities are attacked, when families are forced to flee, and when children are overwhelmed by fear and suffering.

Bishop Carlos of Apartadó shares the following message with us: "Thank you for your support, it is very welcome. It's important to me to have partners like SCiAF. They help communities overcome their pain. I believe that SCiAF is a sign of fraternity – a sign of hope. "Through prayers and action, SCiAF dignifies the human life of our communities, and strengthens us. The Church is there during conflict, there to say to communities, 'We love you; we are here for you!' "Your support is a reason to be thankful to God. We can all be instruments of good. When you give, God multiplies your offering."

Thank you to Bishop Carlos and thank you for the compassion and generosity that you show. Your donations do make a real difference. They can provide essentials like blankets, soap and food packs for families who are displaced. It can help provide counselling sessions for children affected by trauma. And your donations will also help people after the violence subsides, giving them the tools they need to rebuild their lives. Your support will help this vital work continue, ensuring no one is left behind - in Colombia and around the world. We do believe a better world is possible. We believe a more peaceful world is possible.

God bless you and your families during this Holy Season of Lent.

+ Brian McGhee

Bishop President of SCiAF On behalf of the Bishop's Conference of Scotland