



## LENTEN TESTIMONY

### 1. A testimony on welcoming the other

One fine summer day in 2022, as I was about to enter the church for worship, I spotted a family across the street who didn't seem to be familiar with the area. I slowed down to allow our paths to cross... I was well inspired (and it wasn't from me - now I'm sure of it!), as the lady then asked me if the church was open, which allowed me to start a discussion with her. She went in, with her husband and two young children. When they came out, after a few minutes, I felt the need to come out too. So we continued the discussion and I learned that they had been in Canada for only three weeks. I realised that they didn't have much support to help them integrate. Without thinking, I gave them my contact information in case they had questions or needed help, without really knowing how I could be useful... A first message arrived and, one thing leading to another, the texts turned into visits, and the visits into fraternal ties. For my part, I did my best to direct them to the right resources for work integration in particular and for daily needs in the interim. I learned a lot along the way, because the reality of the new arrivals was quite unknown to me... For their part, they allowed me to be a privileged witness of their first steps in their new land of welcome, with all the ups and downs that accompany this courageous step, but, even more, they allowed me to witness the greatness of the faith that animates and carries them. What an inspiring example! I am always so moved to see their capacity to surrender with such confidence to God's benevolence, despite the pitfalls and challenges. God is at work in this family's life... I have seen it, with wonder and humility... God provides in amazing ways! Since that beautiful summer day in 2022, my eyes have been opened to the reality, often difficult at first, of the people we welcome to Canada. My eyes have been opened and my heart has expanded, because today one more family - brother and sisters in Jesus - has a place in it!

*A diocesan involved in her parish community*

## **2. A welcoming heart and hands**

Working at the Sharing Committee, I often meet migrant families who need help. I realise that these families are often fleeing war, violence, and difficult conditions to give their families a better future. Their situation touches me a lot and I feel the need to help them. Some of them need food, cooking utensils, beds, everything they need to furnish a flat. They have nothing when they arrive. Among the people I've been with, there's a family that comes to the church, parents with their 4 children and asks if they can have help. So, with the sharing committee, they were able to get basic materials to function. The eldest boy is a bit lost, he is enrolled in high school, but doesn't know where it is, so I accompany him to school, and then he does well with the bus. I also accompany parents who want to enroll in French classes and then they take the bus. There have been other contacts to meet certain needs. They are very grateful and little by little links are being created. I feel great joy and satisfaction in helping these people, because I feel inspired and I am responding to a request from Christ, that of welcoming the other, the foreigner. I realise that a solidarity is developing and that we are all brothers and sisters in Jesus. Their faith, their courage, and their will to integrate impress me a lot. We need each other to grow and walk together. They have helped me to go beyond by getting involved with them and I hope I have helped them to feel accepted, welcomed and loved.

A person involved in the parish