



OFFICE OF CATHOLIC
CHARITIES & SOCIAL
CONCERN

DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO
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To: Pastors, Administrators, Deacons, School Principals, DRE's and CRE's
From: Miriam Sammartino, Director
Re: **CRS Rice Bowl: Feb 14 – March 31**
Date: February 2, 2024

During Lent, we are invited to encounter God in a deeper way through prayer, fasting and almsgiving and to answer our Gospel call to see the face of Christ in our sisters and brothers in need. During this liturgical season, through CRS Rice Bowl—Catholic Relief Services' Lenten program—we will journey to Uganda, El Salvador, and Indonesia to learn how issues like hunger and climate challenges are impacting our global family. Along the way, we will reflect on how the Eucharist—the Bread of Life—compels us to share bread for life with all members of our human family.

Together, we will support our sisters and brothers around the world while forming families and faith communities to be missionary disciples.

Here are some easy ways to get started:

- **Bulletin Announcement:** Include a short blurb or flyer in your parish bulletin, featuring information about how to participate.
- **Pray:**
 - *Prayer to Begin Lent* to help your community begin their journey with CRS Rice Bowl.
- **Learn:**
 - **CRS Stories of Hope:** Learn how issues like hunger and climate challenges are impacting our global family. visit: <https://www.crsricebowl.org/stories-of-hope/intro>
 - **Lenten Activities for Families:** CRS provides free worksheets and activities for your children to learn more about lent! Visit: <https://www.crsricebowl.org/1-8>
- **Almsgiving:** Almsgiving is central to how we practice Lent, it flows from prayer and fasting. Through a recognition of the world's needs and a personal commitment to act, we give alms.
 - **CRS Rice Bowls:** Please contact Robert Montes at rmontes@scd.org or 916-733-0251 if you're interested in rice bowls for your parish, ministry, class. *Pick-Up and Mailing options available*
 - **Do-it-Yourself Rice Bowls:** Select a container, and label it "CRS Rice Bowl" and collect your alms throughout Lent! Give your donations directly to your Parish or donate online at <https://support.crs.org/donate/change-life-lent-o>



Thank you for inviting families in your parish or school to an enriched Lenten journey through CRS Rice Bowl. Together, we'll make this year's CRS Rice Bowl effect greater than ever.

Respectfully,

Miriam Sammartino
Director

P.S. The Diocesan Food Bowl is now included in the CRS Rice Bowl Lenten Program.

BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

SUNDAY(S) BEFORE ASH WEDNESDAY: *Lent Is Coming!*

Join our faith community in a transformative Lenten journey through CRS Rice Bowl to meet people in Uganda, El Salvador and Indonesia who are working hard to overcome the challenges of hunger and the impact of climate change. During the 40 days of Lent, CRS will reflect on our connectedness as one family in Christ and work together to ensure our sisters and brothers worldwide can thrive. Visit crsricebowl.org to learn more.

FIRST WEEK OF LENT: *A Season for Reflection*

During this holy time, we are called to pause and pay closer attention to our relationship with God and our neighbors. Reflect on how the Lenten pillars of prayer, fasting and almsgiving can guide your journey and how the Eucharist helps us to live in solidarity with our sisters and brothers around the world. Visit crsricebowl.org to learn more and read this week's Story of Hope.

SECOND WEEK OF LENT: *Overcoming Hunger*

In Akwangagwel, Uganda, the climate is very hot and dry. Farmers in this region depend heavily on the rainy season for a successful harvest. But lately—due to the changing climate—the rain has been coming later than it used to and is more inconsistent. Sometimes, when it does rain, it causes flooding and ruins the crops. Learn how Adolf and Florence have taken the matter into their own hands, implementing new farming techniques they learned from a Catholic Relief Services program to improve their farm and fight against hunger in their community. Visit crsricebowl.org to read this week's Story of Hope.

THIRD WEEK OF LENT: *Raising Chickens to Support Her Family*

Nowadays, in Morazán, El Salvador, it is very difficult to know when the rainy or dry seasons

will be. The unpredictable weather puts the livelihood of Sandra's family in jeopardy. Despite the challenges, Sandra and her husband, Santos, remain dedicated to ensuring their children grow healthy and succeed in school. Learn how their strong family dynamic enabled Sandra to participate in a Catholic Relief Services' project on raising chickens and how her determination has helped her family and community. Visit crsricebowl.org to read this week's Story of Hope.

FOURTH WEEK OF LENT: *Increasing Disasters, Increasing Resilience*

Located in Southeast Asia between the Pacific and Indian Oceans, Indonesia has beautiful beaches, diverse cultures and the world's fourth largest population. Many of the country's more than 17,000 islands are in the Ring of Fire, where volcanic eruptions and earthquakes are common. Climate-related disasters such as cyclones are also becoming more frequent and destructive. Find out how—with the support of Catholic Relief Services and generous communities like yours—Evita and her disaster preparedness group are working to keep their community safe. Visit crsricebowl.org to read this week's Story of Hope.

FIFTH WEEK OF LENT: *Embodying the Love of Christ by Caring for One Another*

Reflect on your Lenten journey thus far: What have you learned from our global family members in Uganda, El Salvador and Indonesia? How does the Eucharist unite us with our sisters and brothers around the world? Consider how Christ is present in Adolf and Florence, Sandra and Santos, and Evita. Visit crsricebowl.org to read this week's Story of Hope.

BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

PALM SUNDAY:

Modern Day Simon of Cyrene

Palm Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week. As we walk with Jesus this week, we remember the countless women, children and men who carry heavy crosses even today: crosses of hunger, of vulnerability to climate change, or of a lack of resources. How—like Simon of Cyrene—can you help to carry the crosses of our sisters and brothers in your local community and around the world? Visit crsricebowl.org/holy-week to learn more.



EASTER SUNDAY:

Happy Easter!

As our CRS Rice Bowl journey comes to an end, may the Eucharist continue to transform our lives and help us respond to God's call to serve our global family. Let us commit to sharing the joy of the Resurrection with people in our local community and around the world. Don't forget to turn in your CRS Rice Bowl at [LOCATION] on [DATE] or donate online at crsricebowl.org/donate.

AFTER-EASTER MESSAGING:

Thank you!

Together, we changed lives this Lent through CRS Rice Bowl. **THANK YOU** for being a part of this effort! Don't forget to turn in your CRS Rice Bowl at [LOCATION] on [DATE] or donate online at crsricebowl.org/donate

Prayer to Begin Lent

This prayerful reflection will help your community begin its Lenten journey with CRS Rice Bowl. You can incorporate it into Mass after the homily or during a prayer service or other gathering.

LEADER

Lent is a time for reflection and preparation during which we seek to draw closer to God and turn away from sin. As we walk together on this spiritual journey, may our hearts be transformed by God's love and grace. Over the next 40 days of Lent, we will encounter Christ through people in Uganda, El Salvador, and Indonesia, who are finding ways to overcome hunger and adapt to the impacts of climate change. May our hearts be moved to prayer and action to support our sisters and brothers around the world.

READER 1 Read John 6:33-35.

A reading from the Gospel of John: "For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." So, they said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst."

LEADER

Through the Bread of Life—which we receive in the Eucharist—we are called to share God's love with our global family, especially people experiencing great need. We're invited to act on this call through the Lenten pillars of prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

READER 2

The first pillar of Lent is prayer. We pray to grow in our relationship with God and ask him for guidance on how to live according to his will. In our prayers, we thank God for the gifts we have been given. We also pray for people who

experience need of any kind: physical, spiritual, or emotional.

READER 1

The second pillar is fasting. When we fast, we make more room for God in our lives and unite our sacrifice with Christ's suffering. We give something up to better understand the challenges that confront our sisters and brothers who experience hunger around the world. Enlightened by the Holy Spirit, we recognize that their well-being is important and connected to our own.

READER 2

The third pillar is almsgiving. When we give Lenten alms, we honor Jesus' call to care for our sisters and brothers in need. Donations from CRS Rice Bowl help change lives globally and in our own community: 75% of funds support CRS' work worldwide, and 25% stay in our diocese to alleviate poverty and hunger.

LEADER

God of love,
Through prayer, fasting and almsgiving, we ask you to transform us this Lent and open our hearts to our one human family. May the prayers, recipes and stories from CRS Rice Bowl help us recognize the face of your son, Jesus, in all people around the world and, in doing so, grow closer to you during this season of Lent.

Amen

