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Welcome to the **Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Rice Bowl ministry,** part of your parish Global Solidarity Ambassador Program. Thank you for saying, “Yes,” to spreading the Gospel message to “Love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. And to love your Neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37-39)

Pope Francis has said, “In the poor and outcast we see Christ’s face; by loving and helping the poor, we love and serve Christ…Our efforts are also directed to ending violations of human dignity, discrimination and abuse in the world, for these are so often the cause of destitution.” (*Lenten Message of Our Holy Father Francis, 2014*) In your role as the Global Solidarity Ambassador for the CRS Rice Bowl in your parish, you have the opportunity to love and serve our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, by bringing His love to others in your parish, your community and around the world.

More than forty years ago, Catholics wanted to respond to famine in Africa through Lenten prayers, fasting and almsgiving and the Rice Bowl program was born. Today, the CRS Rice Bowl program has grown to help respond not only to famine in Africa, but to famine and other crises in the 191 countries currently served by CRS.

Your leadership of the CRS Rice Bowl ministry in your parish will not only support the life-sustaining work of CRS, but it will also be an opportunity for you and your fellow parishioners to grow personally in faith and solidarity with our brothers and sisters around the world. It is a powerful way for you to participate in the temporal and eternal life-saving mission of Christ’s Church on earth. In addition, 25% of the CRS Rice Bowl collection in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis comes back to the Archdiocese. Through a grant process, these funds are used to support local ministries that serve the poor and marginalized in our Central and Southern Indiana communities.

In the pages of this CRS Rice Bowl guide, you will find the tools that you need to launch and implement a successful Rice Bowl ministry in your parish. Updates and other resources and materials will be provided to you by Catholic Relief Services for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis to help you effectively and confidently carry out your ambassador role. You will also receive ongoing, pertinent information regarding global situations where the Catholic Church has a moral obligation to respond, so that you understand how the Church in America through CRS is taking positive action to assist and provide for those in need around the world.

In Solidarity,

Catholic Relief Services

Archdiocese of Indianapolis