



DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

Office of the Bishop

February 2020

Dear Friends in Christ,

This year, CRS Rice Bowl's Lenten faith-in-action program contains an invitation to reflect on the Gospel story of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. It is a story with which we are all familiar. Jesus commands his disciples to give the crowd something to eat. They do not understand how, with only five loaves and two fish, it will be possible to feed the thousands that have gathered. Yet, through Christ's prayer and miraculous action "all ate and were satisfied." (Mt 14:20) In this story we see that through God, the gifts we share with those in need are made more abundant and can have a broader impact.

The holy season of Lent is a time when we renew our trust and faith in Jesus and his promise of new life through the resurrection. We rely upon the penitential practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving to deepen our relationship with our Savior and our brothers and sisters around the world. The small, yet meaningful offerings we make this Lent through CRS Rice Bowl will have a significant impact on hungry families in our communities and around the world. In giving financially to provide physical nourishment we also offer Christian witness and love by our response to the Gospel call Jesus made, "give them some food yourselves." (Lk 9:13)

Annually, CRS Rice bowl raises approximately \$6 million for Catholic Relief Services. Twenty-five percent of all donations remain in our diocese to support local hunger and anti-poverty programs. Last year, local funds were granted to the Bread of Life pantry through St. Ann - St. Ignatius Parish in Baldwin, St. Alphonsus' Food and Clothing pantry and Dégagé Ministries in Grand Rapids, and the Caritas Food pantry through St. Mary Parish in Custer.

Discover the many simple ways that the CRS Rice Bowl program can be incorporated into your family's Lenten practice. Visit crsricebowl.org to learn more. Thank you for so generously sharing your blessings with our brothers and sisters who hunger and thirst.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend David J. Walkowiak
Bishop of Grand Rapids