



***“Whatever you did to one of the least of these you did to me.” (Matt 25:45)***

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Rice Bowl Lenten program through Catholic Relief Services. In 1975, CRS Rice Bowl began in Allentown, Pennsylvania as

a response to the devastating drought and famine affecting families in the Sahel region of Africa. “Operation Rice Bowl,” as it was known then, was adopted in 1976 under the guidance of CRS in preparation for the 41st International Eucharistic Congress. The bishops in the United States voted for it to be the official program of CRS in 1977.

At this very moment, millions of people are facing life-threatening levels of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. At the root of this crisis is a perfect storm of poverty, climate change, conflict and inequality. There is no one solution to breaking the cycle of hunger for every community around the world, but we can do our part by giving alms to CRS Rice Bowl so all may live with dignity.

Your donation to CRS Rice Bowl helps provide lifesaving support to more than 200 million people in more than 120 countries. *Did you know that donations stay in your local community, too?* Twenty-five percent of every donation stays in your community to fight hunger and poverty, while 75% supports Catholic Relief Services programming around the world. Learn more at about the work of Catholic Relief Services at [www.crsricebowl.org](http://www.crsricebowl.org)

CRS Rice Bowls are available in the narthex. We invite you and your family to take one and commit to helping families who face hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition. It’s a wonderful way to practice almsgiving in Lent. The Rice Bowls will be collected on Holy Thursday, and the collection during the Mass on Holy Thursday will be for Catholic Relief Services.

### **Prayer to Begin CRS Rice Bowl**

*Lord Jesus, you call us to a conversion of heart during Lent, and you give us the tools to do this through prayer, fasting and almsgiving. When we pray, help us remember the needs of our sisters and brothers. When we fast, help us offer our sacrifice in union with you. When we give, help us recognize our gifts are from you so that we are generous with others.*

*May our Lenten journey with CRS Rice Bowl enable us to follow you more faithfully and love our neighbor more fully. Guide us throughout these 40 days so that we may be joined more closely to you when we arrive at the joyful celebration of Easter. Amen*