



2015 **COMMUNITY REFLECTIONS**

Lent is a
journey
don't
go it
alone



Special thanks to those who contributed to this guide, particularly Natalie Demyan, who wrote the advocacy reflections, and Anthony Garcias, who wrote the reflection on Tanzania.

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In 1975, Catholic families

in the United States wanted to respond, in global solidarity, to famine in the African Sahel. Was there a way to help put food on the tables of the hungry through Lenten fasting and almsgiving? The answer, as it turned out, was yes—and it came in the form of a small cardboard box. Forty years later, our goal is the same: Through our Lenten sacrifices, we put food on the tables of the hungry because, as disciples of Christ, that is what we are called to do.



How to use this book

The following pages provide tools and resources to accompany your community throughout the journey of Lent. Use the guide as is, or select specific features using the icons below and inside to navigate the guide.

PRAYER.....*Begin or end your time together in prayer.*

SCRIPTURE*Meditate on God's word.*

STORY OF HOPE*Learn how Lenten fasting changes lives around the world.*

REFLECTION.....*Contemplate your role in the Church's global mission.*

ACTIVITY*Make God's call real in your life.*

CALL TO ACTION*Consider what you can do to enact change.*

RECIPE*Prepare a simple meal with your community.*
(Visit crsricebowl.org/recipe-archive)



Prayer



Scripture



Story of Hope



Reflection



Activity



Call to Action



Recipe

Check out crsricebowl.org and university.crs.org to learn more. And don't forget to download the CRS Rice Bowl app for Android and iOS.



TANZANIA

week one of Lent



WORDS FROM SCRIPTURE

Authentic Fasting That Leads to Blessings *Isaiah 58:6–12*

Is this not, rather, the fast that I choose: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; setting free the oppressed, breaking off every yoke? Is it not sharing your bread with the hungry, bringing the afflicted and the homeless into your house; clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own flesh? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your wound shall quickly be healed; your vindication shall go before you, and the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer, you shall cry for help, and he will say: “Here I am!” If you remove the yoke from among you, the accusing finger, and malicious speech; if you lavish your food on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted; then your light shall rise in the darkness, and your gloom shall become like midday; then the Lord will guide you always and satisfy your thirst in parched places, will give you strength to your bones and you shall be like a watered garden, like a flowing spring whose waters never fail. Your people shall rebuild the ancient ruins; the foundations from ages past you shall raise up; “Repairer of the breach,” they shall call you, “Restorer of ruined dwellings.”

LENTEN PRAYER

God of all people,

We offer you our Lenten journey.
May we learn to walk as one
human family, remembering in a
special way those who are poorest
and most in need.

Bless our prayers, our fasting and
our Lenten gifts. Through these
actions, we show our love for your
Son Jesus and answer your call to
love one another.

Amen





A Story of Hope

Maize farmers in rural Tanzania were once beholden to wholesale buyers who often paid them far less than they deserved. Thanks to a CRS-sponsored program, farmers are now banding together and learning to grow soybeans that put nutrients back into the soil and provide income for their families.

Watch the video at crsricebowl.org/videos to learn more.



REFLECTION

The prophets of Israel call us back to the core of what it means to be human. God created us not just in goodness, but in right relationship—in harmony with God, with ourselves and all of creation. Catholic tradition refers to this harmony as original justice. Isaiah reminds us that living in right relationship with God includes living in right relationship with others. Gertruda Domayo, featured in the CRS Rice Bowl story of hope from Tanzania, received unfair prices for her hard work. To break the cycle of injustice, she chose to trust and work with others in her village. Now Gertruda can feed, house and clothe her family. She experienced the hope that justice—and community—produces.

Sometimes we see justice through a narrow lens. We think, “I follow the rules” or “I give to charity” and feel satisfied that our work is done. But the prophet Isaiah challenges us to expand our vision of justice, to see why justice is so close to God’s heart. Living a life of justice carries a promise from God—a promise of light and healing, protection and refreshment, a promise that what was broken can be restored. Isn’t this the promise of Easter and the eternal life that Jesus won for us? Justice prepares us—and all creation—for God’s never-ending joy.

Photo by Sara A. Fajardo/CRS





Am I responsible for treating others unjustly? Do I care how workers are treated, whether they are paid a living wage or are regarded with respect? As a consumer, how can I break cycles of injustice and practice justice toward workers?

We can practice justice in small ways that can have big outcomes. Breaking the cycle of injustice happens when family members, friends and co-workers talk to and about one another with kindness and generosity. How can I be a repairer and restorer of relationships today?

ACTIVITY

Catholic Social Teaching: A Tradition Through Quotes

You'll find a collection of quotes at crsricebowl.org/university. Cut the quotes apart, place them in a CRS Rice Bowl (make the opening wider) and invite everyone to take one. Ask participants to reflect on what the quote says and means, and invite them to share their quote with the group. Then, have each participant distill their quote down to a single word that captures both the spirit of the quote and the individual's interpretation of it. Invite each person to share.



Photo by Sara A. Fajardo/CRS

CLOSING PRAYER

One Human Family, Food for All

Campaign Prayer, Caritas Internationalis

O God, you entrusted to us the fruits of all creation so that we might care for the earth and be nourished with its bounty.

You sent us your Son to share our very flesh and blood and to teach us your Law of Love. Through his death and resurrection, we have been formed into one human family.

Jesus showed great concern for those who had no food—even transforming five loaves and two fish into a banquet that served 5,000 and many more.

We come before you, O God, conscious of our faults and failures, but full of hope, to share food with all members in this global family.

Through your wisdom, inspire leaders of government and of business, as well as all the world's citizens, to find just, and charitable solutions to end hunger by assuring that all people enjoy the right to food.

Thus we pray, O God, that when we present ourselves for Divine Judgment, we can proclaim ourselves as “One Human Family” with “Food for All.”

Amen





CATHOLICS CONFRONT GLOBAL POVERTY: A CALL TO ACTION

Catholics Confront Global Poverty educates and mobilizes Catholics in the United States, and others of good will, to defend the lives and dignity of people living in poverty around the world. Together we urge our nation to act in response to the many faces of poverty.

We confront the root causes of poverty worldwide—hunger, disease, conflict and injustice—which disproportionately affect the lives of our impoverished brothers and sisters around the globe. Take the first step today by becoming a member of CCGP at confrontglobalpoverty.org/get-involved. By joining CCGP, you'll join thousands of people across the United States responding to the Gospel call to love and serve our neighbors.

Photos by Philip Laubner/CRS



Ugali

- 4 c water
- 2½ c cornmeal

Bean Soup

- 1 small onion, diced
- 1 green pepper, diced
- 4 T fair trade olive oil
- 1 t curry powder
- 1 t salt
- ¼ t black pepper
- 1 tomato, chopped
- 2 16-oz cans kidney beans, drained
- 3 c unsweetened coconut milk

recipe from
TANZANIA

ugali with bean soup

Ugali: Boil water in saucepan, then stir in cornmeal. Simmer until mixture is thick and water is absorbed. Stir often to prevent burning. Shape the mixture into round balls, one for each person.

Bean Soup: In a large pot, sauté onion and green pepper in oil until soft. Add curry powder, salt, black pepper and tomato. Simmer for 2 minutes, add beans and stir. Add coconut milk and simmer for 10 minutes on low heat. Serve with Ugali.



Watch Fr. Leo Patalinghug prepare this recipe and more on the **CRS Rice Bowl app!**

Makes 4–6 servings

Photo by Sara A. Fajardo/CRS



Photos by Sara A. Fajardo/CRS and Philip Laubner/CRS



NICARAGUA

week two of Lent



WORDS FROM SCRIPTURE

The Quail and the Manna *Exodus 16:2-15*

Here in the wilderness the whole Israelite community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died at the Lord’s hand in the land of Egypt, as we sat by our kettles of meat and ate our fill of bread! But you have led us into this wilderness to make this whole assembly die of famine!” Then the Lord said to Moses: I am going to rain down bread from heaven for you. Each day the people are to go out and gather their daily portion; thus will I test them, to see whether they follow my instructions or not. ... Then Moses said to Aaron, “Tell the whole Israelite community: Approach the Lord, for he has heard your grumbling.” ... The Lord said to Moses: I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them: In the evening twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will have your fill of bread, and then you will know that I, the Lord, am your God. In the evening, quail came up and covered the camp. In the morning there was a layer of dew all about the camp, and when the layer of dew evaporated, fine flakes were on the surface of the wilderness, fine flakes like hoarfrost on the ground. On seeing it, the Israelites asked one another, “What is this?” for they did not know what it was. But Moses told them, “It is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat.”

LENTEN PRAYER

God of all people,

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special way those who are poorest
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love one another.

Amen





A Story of Hope

For coffee farmers in Nicaragua, a sick coffee plant meant a hungry family. Now, farmers are learning to diversify their crops and prepare for a more stable future through CRS-supported savings groups.

Watch the video at crsricebowl.org/videos to learn more.



REFLECTION

We don't like being told what to do. But the passage from the book of Exodus encourages us to reflect on the role humility can and should play in our work for justice. Look at the Israelites—a proud people reduced to grumbling. Listening to God's instruction is the only way they find food. Are we able to hear and heed God's voice, or do we allow our pride to get in the way?

When we work for and with people in the developing world, like coffee farmers in Nicaragua, do we recognize our own biases? Do we assume we have all the answers? Or are we open to learning from those living closest to the issue at hand?

In considering the necessity of food in the lives of every person across the planet, a humble approach is even more essential. After all, food is key to human survival. The last several years have shown us that when food security is not addressed, communities rise up in protest and leaders are overthrown. Those who would rather protect their own pride and power invite chaos and conflict. Humility is the antidote.

Photo by Silverlight for CRS





Prayerfully considering our place in God’s creation can help us achieve this humility. We are stewards, called to serve and uphold the dignity of the entire created world. Power and domination create fear and isolation; humility and self-sacrifice enable us to freely accept God’s love through the world around us—and allow us to give that love away.

Each of us is called to work for justice using our own unique gifts, but as members of countless communities, we have the opportunity to learn and grow by welcoming the wisdom of others. How can, or how has, a humble approach benefited you? Where has it left you frustrated?

When have you, like the Israelites, been asked to follow instructions for your own self-betterment? When have you worked with communities, trying to improve the lives of others? How do you unify these differences in your life?

Photo by Silverlight for CRS



ACTIVITY

Sociologist Father Andrew Greeley wrote that a “pervasive religious sensibility ... inclines Catholics to see the Holy lurking in creation.” Sister Dianne

Bergant writes: “The value of creation does not lie in its usefulness for us. It lies in the fact of its existence from God.” The whole of creation is God’s self-revelation to us.

Go outside. Take a walk, sit near a tree, listen to the birds, feel the rain on your skin. How does the created world, like manna from heaven, provide you with nourishment?



Photos by Silverlight for CRS, Danielle Roberts/CRS and Sam Phelps for CRS

CLOSING PRAYER

One Human Family, Food for All

Campaign Prayer, Caritas Internationalis

O God, you entrusted to us the fruits of all creation so that we might care for the earth and be nourished with its bounty.

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Jesus showed great concern for those who had no food—even transforming five loaves and two fish into a banquet that served 5,000 and many more.

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Through your wisdom, inspire leaders of government and of business, as well as all the world's citizens, to find just, and charitable solutions to end hunger by assuring that all people enjoy the right to food.

Thus we pray, O God, that when we present ourselves for Divine Judgment, we can proclaim ourselves as “One Human Family” with “Food for All.”

Amen





CATHOLICS CONFRONT GLOBAL POVERTY: A CALL TO ACTION

If we are going to act on God's will for us, we must be open to change—and that requires humility. It also requires recognizing that there are things we do not know. Read about hunger-related legislation at CCGP's website, confrontglobalpoverty.org/current-issues/hunger-nutrition. You'll learn how decision making in Congress affects families struggling with hunger.

As it was for the Israelites, it's easy to become impatient and to expect simple solutions. Sometimes, we are planting the seeds for others to harvest. But learning all that we can about current issues enables us to listen more attentively to God's plan—and to live it out each day.

Photo by Philip Laubner/CRS

recipe from
NICARAGUA

gallo pinto



- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 bell pepper, diced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 4 T fair trade olive oil
- 2 c rice
- 4 c water
- 2 16-oz cans red beans, drained
- 1 bay leaf
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- Fried egg or cheese (optional)

In a large pot, sauté onion, bell pepper and garlic in oil. Stir in rice. Cook, stirring often, until onions are soft. Add water and cook, covered, until most of the water has been absorbed. Add beans and bay leaf. Mix well and cook over medium heat for 15 minutes. Serve hot with cheese or fried egg.



Watch Fr. Leo Patalinghug prepare this recipe and more on the **CRS Rice Bowl app!**

Makes 4-6 servings

Photos by Philip Laubner/CRS and Karen Kasmauski for CRS



NIGER

week three of Lent



WORDS FROM SCRIPTURE

The Sermon on the Plain *Luke 6:20–26*

And raising his eyes toward his disciples he said:

Blessed are you who are poor,
for the kingdom of God is yours.

Blessed are you who are now hungry,
for you will be satisfied.

Blessed are you who are now weeping,
for you will laugh.

Blessed are you when people hate you,
and when they exclude and insult you,
and denounce your name as evil
on account of the Son of Man.

Rejoice and leap for joy on that day! Behold, your reward
will be great in heaven.

For their ancestors treated the prophets in the same way.

But woe to you who are rich,
for you have received your consolation.

But woe to you who are filled now,
for you will be hungry.

Woe to you who laugh now,
for you will grieve and weep.

Woe to you when all speak well of you,
for their ancestors treated the false prophets in this way.

The Beatitudes *Matthew 5:3–12*

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the clean of heart,
for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of
righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you
and utter every kind of evil against you [falsely] because
of me.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great
in heaven.

Thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

LENTEN PRAYER

God of all people,

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May we learn to walk as one
human family, remembering in a
special way those who are poorest
and most in need.

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our Lenten gifts. Through these
actions, we show our love for your
Son Jesus and answer your call to
love one another.

Amen





A Story of Hope

Life in Niger is ruled by the seasons. There's the dry season, the hot season, the rainy season—and the hungry season, when food supplies run out and prices rise. To avoid going hungry, farmers in Niger are now coming together to dig reservoirs—work that provides an income and water for crops and livestock.

Watch the video at crsricebowl.org/videos to learn more.



REFLECTION

Our lives are made up of seasons. Yes, there is summer and there is winter, but we also experience changes in relationships, jobs, schooling and location. Some days we feel successful and happy; other days, we feel angry and agitated. And of course, there are so many other seasons in between.

Through the Beatitudes, Jesus invites us to consider which seasons we are dwelling in. Are we following Christ's example of meekness, showing mercy to ourselves and others? Or are we rich without giving to those in need?

Lent is a time to assess the season in which we find ourselves—and to make a change. It's a time to become the peacemaker, to clean our hearts. And it's a time to search out people in our own communities who find themselves in challenging seasons.

Sometimes we find ourselves affected by seasons beyond our control—look at farmers in Niger whose lives are ruled by dry, hot, rainy and hungry seasons. How do you respond when you are unable to control your circumstances? How do you help others in similar situations? What role does hope play?

Photo by Francois Therrien for CRS





Lent is a time for conversion.
Think about the season in which you currently dwell, and think about the season to which you'd like to move. What needs to change in your life to make this happen?

ACTIVITY

The Beatitudes: A Comparison

Compare Matthew's version of the Beatitudes to Luke's. How do they differ in approach and content? How might these differences impact how we pursue peace and justice? Are they envisioning different paths of discipleship?



Photo by Francois Therrien for CRS and Lane Hartill/CRS



CLOSING PRAYER

One Human Family, Food for All

Campagna Prayer, Caritas Internationalis

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Jesus showed great concern for those who had no food—even transforming five loaves and two fish into a banquet that served 5,000 and many more.

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Through your wisdom, inspire leaders of government and of business, as well as all the world's citizens, to find just, and charitable solutions to end hunger by assuring that all people enjoy the right to food.

Thus we pray, O God, that when we present ourselves for Divine Judgment, we can proclaim ourselves as “One Human Family” with “Food for All.”

Amen





CATHOLICS CONFRONT GLOBAL POVERTY: A CALL TO ACTION

The Beatitudes are about reciprocity—what we do for others is also done for us. When we speak out for those who are hungry, we know we've done God's work. At the same time, when we see others suffer, we ourselves suffer. It is then that we are given the opportunity to take action.

CCGP's Action Alerts draw attention to the needs of those who are poorest and most vulnerable. Go to CCGP's Action Alerts page, confrontglobalpoverty.org/get-involved/action-center, to find out how you can help ease the suffering of those most in need.

Photos by Lane Hartill/CRS and Philip Laubner/CRS





Photo by Francois Therrien for CRS



recipe from
NIGER

west African peanut stew



- 1 medium onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 T fresh ginger, minced
- 4 T fair trade olive oil
- 6 c water
- ½ t crushed red pepper
- ½ t salt
- ½ t black pepper
- 3 small sweet potatoes, cubed
- 2 medium tomatoes, diced
- 3 c chopped kale or spinach
- 1 c crunchy peanut butter

In a large pot, sauté onion, garlic and ginger in oil until tender. Add 5 cups water and season with crushed red pepper, salt and black pepper. Stir in sweet potatoes and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for 15 minutes. Stir in 1 cup water, tomatoes, greens and peanut butter. Cook over medium heat for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Serve over rice.



Watch Fr. Leo Patalinghug prepare this recipe and more on the **CRS Rice Bowl app!**



Makes 4-6 servings

Photos by Lane Hartill/CRS and Karen Kasmauski for CRS



LEBANON

week four of Lent



WORDS FROM SCRIPTURE

The Judgment of the Nations *Matthew 25:35-40*

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.” Then the righteous will answer him and say, “Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?” And the king will say to them in reply, “Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.”

LENTEN PRAYER

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Amen





A Story of Hope

The civil war in Syria has forced more than 2 million people from their homes—70 percent are women and children. Neighboring countries like Lebanon have opened their doors to accept them. CRS is providing immediate assistance, like food vouchers, and supporting long-term justice by keeping children in school.

Watch the video at crsricebowl.org/videos to learn more.



REFLECTION

The plight of refugee families gives us the opportunity to delve into the heart of Matthew 25. In the faces of Syrian, Sudanese, Congolese and other refugee communities, we see Jesus' Gospel call made real.

We also have an opportunity to explore what the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops considers the two feet of love in action: charity and justice. In charity, we satisfy the immediate needs of those we encounter. In justice, we ask: Why are people hungry, thirsty, naked and homeless?

When it comes to addressing hunger, stepping in with both feet—charity and justice—is essential. Our neighbors in the global community need to eat today—and tomorrow. At CRS, we often reflect on that old adage of teaching a community to fish. Give them a fish, and they'll eat for a day; teach them to fish and they'll eat for a lifetime. We want the community to fish so they can feed themselves—but we at CRS are constantly working to ensure they have adequate access to the river.

Matthew 25 is a call to conversion—a call to leap forward with both feet, with charity and justice. We give of ourselves instinctually because we now see, with the eyes of Christ, those places where injustice prevails—and we act.

Photo by Sam Tarling for CRS





How do you take steps with both feet of love—charity and justice—in your everyday life? Can you think of an example when stepping in with one foot led you to take a step with the other? Is this a useful image for framing the issue?

Matthew 25 points to the heart of our Gospel mission and details what the Catholic Church considers to be the Corporal Works of Mercy. Is there a particular aspect of the passage that resonates with your own work? Is there a part that you find challenging, or that you would like to commit yourself to living more fully?

ACTIVITY

The Stories in the Walls

Catholic churches are places where stories live in the walls—just look at the stained glass, the Stations of the Cross, the statues of holy women and men, the images of scenes from Christian history. All these things remind us that we are a part of an ongoing story—the story of salvation—and that many people have come before us. And many will come after, finding hope and strength in the Gospel.

If you are in a church, a chapel or another prayer space, take a moment to study the stories in the walls. If not, do a quick Google search to find holy images with which to pray. What resonates with you when you look at these visual stories? How can you enter into what is being depicted? As you reflect on your story—and the larger story of Christianity—pay close attention to how the feet of love hold up each moment.

Photo by Sam Tarling for CRS



CLOSING PRAYER

One Human Family, Food for All

Campaign Prayer, Caritas Internationalis

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Amen





CATHOLICS CONFRONT GLOBAL POVERTY: A CALL TO ACTION

The face of God is revealed in the faces of the poor and vulnerable. When refugees and others who are hungry and suffering cry out, we are called to respond. To paraphrase St. Teresa of Avila, we are the hands and feet of Christ here on earth.

You can advocate for those who are hungry and suffering at CCGP's website, confrontglobalpoverty.org/get-involved/tools-resources/develop-action-plan/. The CCGP Action Center will provide all of the tools and information you need to send an email, make a phone call or schedule a visit with your representative and senators.

With your voice, you can be an instrument of God's loving plan today and tomorrow. Your voice can make a difference locally and globally!

Photos by Karen Kasmauski for CRS and Philip Laubner/CRS





- 32 oz plain whole-milk yogurt
- Cheesecloth
- 1 bunch fresh mint, minced
- 1 t dry mint
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 16-oz cans chickpeas with liquid
- Pita bread
- ¼ c almonds, chopped and toasted (optional)
- 2 T fair trade olive oil

recipe from
LEBANON

fattet laban

Place a colander into a bowl, line it with cheesecloth and place yogurt in it. Cover and place in refrigerator. Allow yogurt to drain for a few hours or overnight.

Combine drained yogurt, fresh and dry mint, and crushed garlic in a bowl. In a pan, heat chickpeas in their liquid until warm, then drain and set aside. Toast pita bread in oven until golden in color. Break some of the pita bread and place pieces in a large bowl with chickpeas. Add yogurt mixture. Top with fresh mint and toasted almonds. Drizzle olive oil over top. Serve with remaining pita bread.



Watch Fr. Leo Patalinghug prepare this recipe and more on the **CRS Rice Bowl app!**

Makes 4–6 servings

Photo by Rashad Sisemore for CRS





Photos by Sam Tarling for CRS and Philip Laubner/CRS



final week of Lent



WORDS FROM SCRIPTURE

The Last Supper *Luke 22:14–20*

When the hour came, he took his place at table with the apostles. He said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for, I tell you, I shall not eat it [again] until there is fulfillment in the kingdom of God.” Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and said, “Take this and share it among yourselves; for I tell you [that] from this time on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God comes.” Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me.” And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you.”

LENTEN PRAYER

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Amen





A Story of Hope

In the final days of Lent, the stories of hope become our own. How has this Lenten journey inspired you to live out the Gospel call? Christopher West invites us to reflect on how our Lenten fast prepares us for the feast of Easter in the “What is Lent?” video series.

Watch the video at crsricebowl.org/whatislent to learn more.



REFLECTION

We don't hear a lot of Greek these days, so the word “kenosis” might catch us off guard. “Kenosis” is the self-emptying of Christ, the gift of God's love to us. It reminds us that God the Son emptied himself of what it meant to be God, to take on what it meant to be human in the person of Christ—and that this was done solely out of love. It's what we're called to do each and every day: push aside what it means to be me and take in Christ so we can better serve others. It's the very nature of relationship, the very nature of love, the very nature of God. It's what the Eucharist is all about.

The fast is an invitation to remove those things that get in the way of loving others; the feast is an invitation to take part in God's glory. One is necessary for the other.

And let's not forget John's account of the Last Supper. Luke describes a familiar scene: the breaking of the bread, the sharing of the cup, friends gathered for a meal. Jesus uses tangible, earthly things to make present a very intangible, heavenly reality. But in John's Gospel, Jesus washes the feet of his disciples—he serves them. This, then, is what the Eucharist is all about: service and love of others. This is how we connect the fast with the feast—by following Jesus'

Photo courtesy of Thinkstock





example. Taking part in the Eucharist goes beyond receiving Holy Communion. Taking part in the Eucharist is a daily practice.

How has your Lenten fasting helped you be more present to others? Does the Eucharist help prepare you for the feast of Easter?

Jesus uses simple bread and wine to teach a lesson. For Catholics, this bread and wine become Jesus in the Eucharist at every Mass. What does this say about the importance of food and agriculture? What does this say about how God views the created world?

ACTIVITY

The Justice Diet

What have you consumed today? As a group, spend time listing everything you ate and drank. Try to trace the supply chain of each item. If you ate meat, consider the grains that the animals ate, and the money the farmer spent to feed them. If you drank coffee, consider the conditions in which the farmers worked. What has gone into your day's diet? Where might injustice have taken place—social or ecological? As we move from the fast to the feast, it is important to be intentional about what we are feasting on.

Photo by Karen Kasmauski for CRS





CLOSING PRAYER

One Human Family, Food for All

Campaign Prayer, Caritas Internationalis

O God, you entrusted to us the fruits of all creation so that we might care for the earth and be nourished with its bounty.

You sent us your Son to share our very flesh and blood and to teach us your Law of Love. Through his death and resurrection, we have been formed into one human family.

Jesus showed great concern for those who had no food—even transforming five loaves and two fish into a banquet that served 5,000 and many more.

We come before you, O God, conscious of our faults and failures, but full of hope, to share food with all members in this global family.

Through your wisdom, inspire leaders of government and of business, as well as all the world's citizens, to find just, and charitable solutions to end hunger by assuring that all people enjoy the right to food.

Thus we pray, O God, that when we present ourselves for Divine Judgment, we can proclaim ourselves as “One Human Family” with “Food for All.”

Amen





CATHOLICS CONFRONT GLOBAL POVERTY: A CALL TO ACTION

In order to carry out God’s plan for us, we must empty ourselves of our personal concerns and demonstrate empathy for the least among us. We do that through fasting, reflection, prayer and action. But how do we spread the concept of “kenosis” to those around us? How do we spread the vision of a more just world in harmony with God?

During this Lenten season, you’ve become an advocate for the poor and vulnerable with CRS Rice Bowl and CCGP. As we celebrate the resurrection of Christ, celebrate your advocacy by sharing what you’ve learned. Consider inviting your parish and local community to join CCGP, to speak out for justice. Become a leader by organizing visits to your legislators’ offices. Engage other Catholic and faith-based organizations committed to protecting the poorest among us. The possibilities are endless.

We serve God by serving one another. As we look ahead to this Easter season, let’s listen attentively to God’s call and respond with love and compassion.

Photo by Karen Kasmauski for CRS



what is Lent?

Ever wondered, “What is Lent?” You’re not alone.

Fr. James Martin, SJ; Cardinal Timothy Dolan; Dr. Carolyn Y. Woo and others are wondering too. And they offer their own reflections at **csrcicebowl.org/whatislent**.

Watch the videos. Ask your friends. Then answer for yourself.

What is Lent? A time to pray, fast, give—**and change lives.**







CRS Rice Bowl: CRS Rice Bowl is the Lenten faith-in-action program of Catholic Relief Services, inviting faith communities to live in solidarity with our poorest and most vulnerable brothers and sisters around the world through the three Lenten pillars of prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

@CRSRiceBowl

CRS University: CRS University partners with Catholic colleges, universities, and centers on other campuses, bringing to life for students, faculty, and staff a variety of opportunities to live our faith through tangible acts of solidarity with our brothers and sisters around the world. We engage through advocacy, education, prayer, course syllabi and resources for the classroom, and participation in other CRS programs, such as CRS Rice Bowl and CRS Fair Trade.

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