

WEAVE THEMES FROM CRS RICE BOWL

into weekly homilies, reflections and faith-sharing gatherings. Catholic social teaching themes for each week are taken from the CRS Rice Bowl Lenten Calendar. All Sunday readings come from Cycle C.

WEEK 1: FEBRUARY 14

Deuteronomy 26:1-11; Romans 10:8b-13; Luke 4:1-13

Option for the Poor

Jesus tells us to care for those who are most in need in the world. He reminds us of our Christian duty to give a voice to those who go unheard and to help those who are most vulnerable.

- We hear in Deuteronomy, “We cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors, and the LORD heard our cry and saw our affliction, our toil and our oppression.”

If God hears the cries of the poor, how should we interact with those who are poor, oppressed and marginalized?

- Paul calls us to put our faith in God, trusting that in so doing, God will act. Jesus shows us what that looks like by resisting temptation in the desert and living those 40 days in trust.

Where in our lives are we called to trust God more explicitly this Lent?

- This week, CRS Rice Bowl features a family from Colombia who, forced to flee their home because of conflict, experiences firsthand what it means to be aliens in a foreign place, left to rely on the fruits of the land. What initially appears frightening and lonely becomes the stepping stone to new opportunity and community.

How do I welcome the stranger in my daily life? Do I offer opportunity and community, or do I turn my back on my neighbor?

WEEK 2: FEBRUARY 21

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18; Philippians 3:17-4:1; Luke 13:31-35 or Luke 9:28-36, 37-43a

Rights and Responsibilities

As human beings, we have the right to live and grow in peace. Because we have that right, we have the responsibility to make sure others enjoy the same opportunity too.

- God makes a promise to Abraham and his descendants; God and Abraham have a responsibility to live up to that promise.

How do we uphold our responsibility to promises we have made to God and others?

- Paul reminds us that “our citizenship is in heaven.” God loves all people—all citizens of that heavenly home—equally.

What kinds of rights and responsibilities does that citizenship imply?

- This week, CRS Rice Bowl features a woman from Laos who, recognizing the needs of her family and her own unique gifts, uses her love of cooking to feed her children—and an entire school.

How are we called to use our own unique gifts for the betterment of others?

WEEK 3: FEBRUARY 28

*Isaiah 55:1-9; 1 Corinthians 10:1-13;
Luke 13:1-9*

Sacredness and Dignity of the Human Person

When God created us, he made us in his image and likeness. That means that every human being has a special value and purpose. We need to care for each other so that we can be the people God calls us to be.

- Isaiah beautifully describes the invitation of grace God extends to each of us. We are reminded that our inherent dignity means that God lives in us and desires that we stay close to him.

How does this invitation from God guide us in our relationships with one another?

- Jesus' parable of the fig tree reminds us to cultivate our own lives—and those of others. We should not cut anyone down but rather build each other up.

How do we cultivate the Spirit at work in those around us?

- This week, CRS Rice Bowl features a woman from Rwanda who, understanding the importance of good nutrition for her child, worked to ensure that her baby received the nutrition she needs from conception to her second birthday.

How do we work to protect life in all its forms, from conception to natural death?

WEEK 4: MARCH 6

*Joshua 5:9-12; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21;
Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32*

Call to Family, Community and Participation

Human beings are social by nature. We, like the early disciples, are called to come together as a community whether that community is our classroom, workplace or family.

- Paul says, "So we are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us."

How am I called to bring God into my community? Where can I allow God to speak through me?

- "I no longer deserve to be called your son," says the prodigal, but his father sees things differently. As a member of the family, he has an important role that no one else can fill—and his father calls him back to it.

As members of God's family, do we recognize and live out our unique roles?

- This week, CRS Rice Bowl features two schoolchildren from Honduras who help one another learn and grow.

Who does God put in our lives to help us grow? Who in our lives are we called to help?

WEEK 5: MARCH 13

*Isaiah 43:16–21; Philippians 3:4b–14;
John 12:1–8*

Care for Creation

God created every plant, every mountaintop, every animal—everything. And God said that these things are good. We find God in these good things he made, and so we must take care of creation, both for ourselves and for all of our human family.

- Isaiah draws our attention to God at work in the natural environment. “See, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?”

Where do we encounter God in creation?

- Jesus says, “You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.” Indeed, we now encounter Christ in the cry of the poor, and the cry of the earth.

Do we recognize the suffering Christ in the poor, in the earth? How do we respond?

- This week, CRS Rice Bowl features a woman from Madagascar whose crops were destroyed in a recent storm. As a farmer, she needed seeds to get her family back on their feet.

Do we listen to the needs of others, or do we impose our own assumptions?

WEEK 6: MARCH 20 (PALM SUNDAY)

*Isaiah 50:4–9a; Philippians 2:5–11;
Luke 22:14–23:56 or Luke 23:1–49*

Global Solidarity

Jesus tells us to love our neighbors, even though they may be different from us. That means those neighbors who live next door and those who live on the other side of the planet. Jesus reminds us that we are all part of God’s great family.

- Isaiah reminds us that God gives us a “well-trained tongue ... to answer the weary a word that will waken them.”

Do we listen to God’s Spirit within us? How does the Spirit motivate us and guide our words as we work for a more just world?

- Jesus “emptied himself, taking the form of a slave.”

How are we called, especially in these last days of Lent, to empty ourselves for the good of others?

- This week, CRS Rice Bowl reminds us of the needs faced by communities in our own country.

How have our Lenten reflections on global solidarity affected how we view those in need in our own communities?



Photo by Karen Kismauski for CRS