

## BLESSING TO BEGIN THE LENTEN SEASON

This blessing will help your community begin your Lenten journey with CRS Rice Bowl. You can incorporate it into Mass after the homily, or during prayer services or other gatherings. Make sure you have enough CRS Rice Bowls to pass out after they've been blessed—and recruit volunteers to hand one to each family.

### INTRODUCTION

As we look ahead to our Lenten journey, may our fasting be a hunger for justice, our alms an offering of peace, and our prayers a reflection of humble and grateful hearts. We ask the Holy Spirit to accompany us as we spend these 40 days reflecting on what it means to emerge from the desert ready to encounter the needs of the world with the hope of the Resurrection. How may this encounter with the Resurrection inspire us to reach out to those most in need? How may our prayers, fasting and almsgiving support those worldwide, especially those who are forced to flee their homes for safety or better opportunities? We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever.

Amen

### READING

Let us listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah (58:5–8).

### WEEKLY PRAYER INTENTIONS

Pray for those in need around the world and in your own community. (See page 5 or [crsricebowl.org/parish](http://crsricebowl.org/parish).)

### BLESSING OF THE CRS RICE BOWLS

God of all people,

You are the source of every blessing. May we be mindful of your presence now and as we use these CRS Rice Bowls in prayer, fasting and almsgiving. May they be instruments of encounter, bringing us closer to you, our God, and to our neighbors both near and far. May these days in the desert inspire us to bring hope to the most vulnerable—those experiencing hunger, lack of economic opportunity, and violence that force them to migrate. Through these 40 days, may we deepen our faith in you and our love for one another, as we prepare for the great celebration of Easter.

Amen



Photo by Lauren Carroll/CRS

## OFFERTORY PRAYER TO END THE LENTEN JOURNEY

Use this offertory prayer at a CRS Rice Bowl closing ceremony or as a part of the Mass. Encourage children and families to process forward with their CRS Rice Bowls, and place them in a basket or collection area in the sanctuary or other church location.

God of the Resurrection,

You offer us the example of Christ in the desert who conquered his fears to save us.

As we end our Lenten journey, may we continue to have the courage to walk with our brothers and sisters around the world who are hungry, with those who must flee their homes because of war or lack of opportunity and with all who need our comfort and compassion.

We pray that these, our Lenten sacrifices, may be an offering of solidarity and a promise of ongoing encounter with our one human family.

As good stewards of your many gifts, may we always remember to reach out beyond ourselves to encounter the needs of all.

And wherever we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty or welcome the stranger, may we remember that we are encountering the Risen Christ.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen

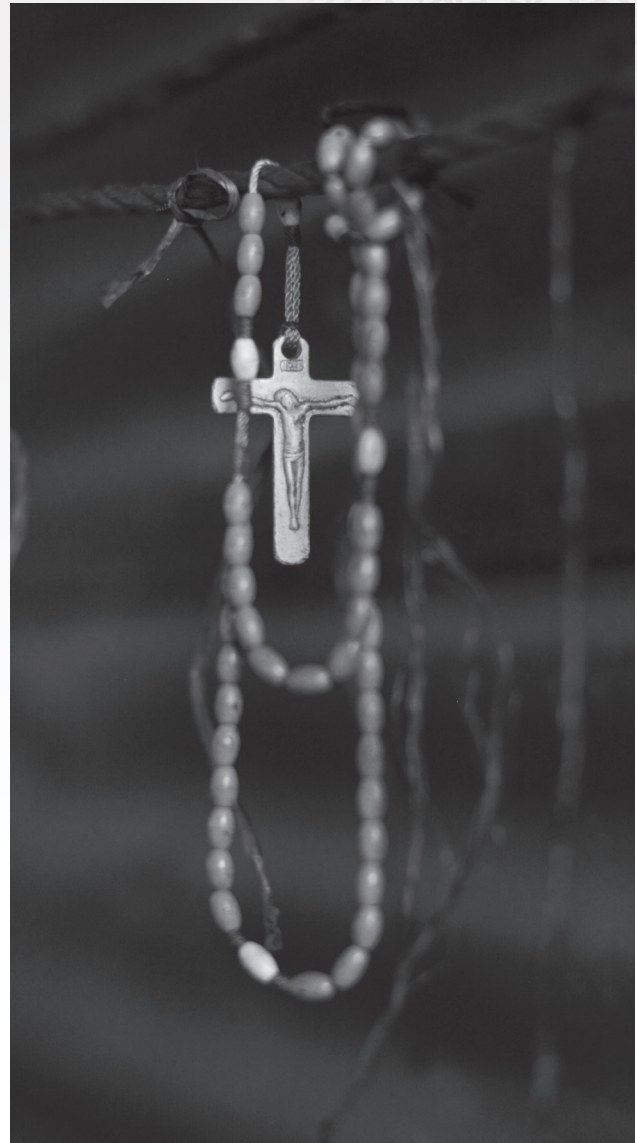


Photo by Laura Elizabeth Pohl for CRS

