June 10, 2019

**Attn: Pastors, parish staff, and Rice Bowl contact**

**Re: CRS Rice Bowl thanks and evaluation**

This is a note to thank you for your parish’s participation in the 2019 Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Lenten Rice Bowl Initiative, to ask for your suggestions in making future years better, and to advise you of local grant opportunities available to your parish for anti-hunger initiatives.

First, thank you for participating in Rice Bowl as part of your Lenten journey. I began my new position as Director of Life & Justice for the Diocese of Camden just before Lent began this year. Because of that, I am still learning how Rice Bowl works and how it can assist our parishes and schools. With Bishop Sullivan’s support and the participation of so many of you, it has been a great blessing to see some of this in action. I’m hoping for your input (and anyone on your staff/school, if applicable) on best practices to help make CRS Rice Bowl even better next year.

Are there any particular successful or meaningful activities that you do around CRS and Rice Bowl? Do you use any of the CRS Rice Bowl resources available at [www.crsricebowl.org](http://www.crsricebowl.org) (bulletin inserts, videos, stations, prayers etc…)? If yes, which ones and what is their impact? Do you have any suggestions for what the Life & Justice Office can do to better support your Rice Bowl efforts? (Please email you responses to matthew.davis@camdendiocese.org)

If you have a school or faith formation program, are their contributions sent in to the Diocese as part of the parish donations or do they send them in separately? We may not know that your parish or school is participating and want to make sure that everyone who participates is given thanks for their efforts. If your parish sends in a combined check, would it be possible to attach a note with a breakdown of parish, school, and faith formation? And if your parish hasn’t sent in this year’s donations yet, please remember to send them in.

One reason this is important is that the Life & Justice office has begun a CRS Rice Bowl grant program (2018 was the 2nd year) to help support local hunger initiatives throughout the Diocese. The requests for grant applications typically go out to the parishes in early fall and are awarded by year’s end. The monies for these projects come from the 25% of Rice Bowl donations that remain here in the Camden Diocese. Some examples of parish approved grants were for parish food pantries, community gardens, money to purchase fresh produce, sandwich making projects etc… Please keep this in mind and look out for more information in the fall.

CRS Rice Bowl invites us to encounter our struggling brothers and sisters both around the world and in our local community during Lent. Thank you for your engagement and support.

Sincerley,



Matt Davis, Director