



# DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

*Office of the Bishop*

February 2007

My dear friends:

As we approach the holy season of Lent, I write to encourage you to participate in Catholic Relief Services' Operation Rice Bowl. This Lenten program provides us with one opportunity to take part in a concrete action that can make a tangible difference in the lives of our brothers and sisters who suffer from hunger and poverty.

In this liturgical season, we come together to celebrate our traditional Lenten practices. We pray with our families and faith communities, fast in solidarity with those who are hungry, and give sacrificial contributions to support the global work of the Church through Catholic Relief Services and other activities while we learn about the joys and challenges faced by our neighbors around the world.

This year, Operation Rice Bowl will embrace the theme *One Light, One Journey, One Human Family*. Catholic Relief Services has designed new materials to enhance your Lenten experience in 2007. I encourage you to visit [www.crs.org/orb](http://www.crs.org/orb) to find useful information about Operation Rice Bowl.

Annually, Operation Rice Bowl raises close to \$6 million for Catholic Relief Services, and an estimated \$2 million that is retained by dioceses in the United States for local hunger and poverty alleviation efforts. Last year, our Grand Rapids Diocese sent over \$65,000 to the national office and used 25% of the total funds collected for local relief efforts such as food pantries and heating assistance help for seniors and low income families in our parishes and community.

I thank you in advance for considering participation in Operation Rice Bowl 2007. Your parish office can provide the rice bowl materials. On behalf of all those who benefit from Operation Rice Bowl, I thank you for your prayers and support, which continue to make this program a success each year.

With gratitude and prayerful good wishes,

Most Rev. Walter A. Hurley  
Bishop of Grand Rapids