



## Overview: Diocesan Capacity Building Initiative for Global Solidarity

### Summary

CRS seeks to partner with dioceses throughout the U.S. to serve Catholics as they live their faith in solidarity with their brothers and sisters around the world. We see global solidarity as an integrated part of the social mission of the Church, and accordingly, seek to strengthen the structures of social ministry at both the diocesan and the parish level to better educate and engage Catholics in global solidarity.

CRS recognizes many of the challenges facing diocesan social ministry staff, including the limited capacity of many offices. We believe that a key to successful social ministry is the development of skilled leaders, both at the diocesan and parish levels. Those leaders, in turn, will invite, assist and organize fellow parishioners to deepen, in concrete ways, their baptismal call to social ministry generally, and to global solidarity specifically.

The CRS *Diocesan Capacity Building Initiative for Global Solidarity* is an ambitious but focused vision and framework for supporting dioceses in their efforts to reach U.S. Catholics in parishes. It is based on extensive conversations over a two-year period with parish leaders, diocesan social ministry staff, national social ministry partners and our sister organization in Great Britain, CAFOD. It reflects the U. S. Bishops' parish-based social ministry model, "Communities of Salt and Light".

The *Initiative* has four primary elements that address two critical and related issues: (1) how to increase diocesan capacity to support social ministry; and, (2) how to build parish-based social ministry structures that will mobilize and activate parishioners.

The four *Initiative* components are:

1. To assist dioceses in helping parishes **build "Global Solidarity Teams"** (or other structures) that will *recruit, form, train and engage* a significant portion of parishioners in global solidarity ministry.
2. To **provide an infusion of resources** to participating dioceses that, in turn, assist targeted parishes build those teams of skilled leaders to develop and organize parishioners to engage in global solidarity action. The package of resources may include (but are not limited to):
  - A "Leadership Development and Team Organizing Training Package"
  - Parish leader training scholarships (Up to \$1,000)
  - CRS Action Vehicles (e.g. CRS Rice Bowl, Food Fast, Fair Trade, Catholics Confront Global Poverty, etc...)
  - Social Policy Advocacy Support (partnered with USCCB)
  - Pastor and Deacon Formation Opportunities (in partnership with the CRS Global Fellows Program)... recognizing the critical role of pastors.

- A diocesan “intern program” (to provide staffing support with a \$5,000 stipend each year)
- Wide variety of awareness and education materials
- Outlet(s) for parishioners desiring to give time, talent, and resources, as an expression of their faith-filled understanding of solidarity. (See **\*\*Note, below**)
- Partnership with *JustFaith Ministries* (and direct access to several of their resources)
- Professional staff to serve as an organizing consultant and “sounding board”
- Intentional, organized networking for support and sharing best practices

**\*\* NOTE**

*The CRS Diocesan Capacity Building Initiative for Global Solidarity envisions a greater number of Catholics involved in global solidarity efforts through a myriad of ways including, prayer, learning, participation in formation experiences, involvement in Fair Trade opportunities, giving of time or resources, and / or advocating on behalf of their brothers and sisters around the world. CRS views the opportunity for parishioners to give funds to CRS projects assisting in the development of impoverished people, or in recovery from a natural or human-made disaster, as a critical vehicle for good-willed people of faith to express solidarity... something U.S. Catholics want to do and do well.*

*The Initiative sees charitable responses as a legitimate and much needed expression of faith that has a direct, positive impact for the poor, particularly because of the careful, transparent and responsible way CRS handles those funds. However, CRS couples the fundraising action vehicles with awareness raising and formation opportunities. We view “giving” as an open door and an invitation to a deeper understanding of the Catholic Social Teaching theme of Solidarity which can lead to even greater action. Like CRS as a whole, this ‘Initiative’ places fundraising in a stewardship context.*

3. To **form a partnership** between your diocese and CRS, **guided by an agreement (endorsed by your bishop) that includes an annual plan** to ensure the discipline and mutual accountability critical for success.
4. To **be inclusive** by design. The *Diocesan Capacity Building Initiative* attempts to recognize and enhance the excellent social ministry work that has been and is currently being done in dioceses and parishes. Per “Communities of Salt and Light”, it views *global solidarity* as a specifically focused ministry within broader parish social ministry. Therefore, while the understandable center of this CRS project is global solidarity, implementation at the diocesan and parish levels will be integrated with full parish-based social ministry efforts when that is possible.

**Project Criteria**

The following set of criteria was generated by a CRS diocesan director advisory team, along with a list of other considerations, and will be utilized by CRS staff to determine which dioceses are selected to participate in the *Diocesan Capacity Building Initiative for Global Solidarity*:

1. Bishop’s support and endorsement.
2. Commitment to submitting an annual plan that includes building capacity.
3. Someone at the diocesan level is specifically identified to oversee / manage the effort.

4. CRS diocesan director is in place or a commitment to name a CRS diocesan director. (This person does not have to be the diocesan person responsible for staffing the Initiative.)
5. Some record of parish-based social ministry success and working knowledge of/relationship with parishes in the diocese.
6. Some demonstrated interest in global solidarity ministry, especially if any CRS Advocacy and/or Programs are being done.
7. Stated 3-year commitment to the project.
8. Commitment to and some previous participation in the CRS collection or other CRS fundraising effort.
9. Willingness to share the on-going experience, including evaluation, with peers.

***Other considerations...***

1. Expressed interest in Catholics Confront Global Poverty and CRS Rice Bowl.
2. Active *JustFaith Ministry* effort.
3. Diocese offers special/unique demographic factors.
4. Active overseas diocesan and/or parish partnerships.

**Concluding Thought:** The *Diocesan Capacity Building Initiative for Global Solidarity* is a “construction project”. Diocesan capacity will be expanded by building the project, step by step, following a blueprint with a clear vision and a systematic approach. It will take time, resources and commitment but, it is doable. The payoff will be more and more U.S. Catholics deeply involved in social ministry broadly and *Global Solidarity* specifically through their parishes.