



One in nine people worldwide do not have enough to eat. Many do not have enough nutritious food. As missionary disciples, we are called to respond to the urgent needs of those who face hunger and malnutrition and to address the root causes of this global crisis. Together, we can lead the way to prevent and end hunger by uniting as a community to pray, learn and act in support of our human family in need.

Compassionate hearts shorten distances

Thanks to the CRS Lenten program, CRS Rice Bowl, Alejandra Estrada realized that helping the most vulnerable around the world doesn't depend on where one lives.

When Alejandra was a child living in Mexico, she used to visit the house of some religious sisters. Inside the entrance of the house hung a picture of one of the nuns in Africa hugging a child who suffered from malnutrition. And every time she saw the photo, Alejandra would dream of becoming a nun to go to Africa to help children in need.

Alejandra now lives in California, and that desire to help people living in poverty was reborn when she encountered Catholic Relief Services through CRS Rice Bowl. "Every time I was more shocked to learn about the poverty and hunger that our brothers and sisters

experience around the world even today," she says.

Gradually, Alejandra began to motivate others in her parish to participate in concrete actions of solidarity. Today she leads the way volunteering for CRS in her diocese.

During Lent, Alejandra enjoys cooking CRS Rice Bowl recipes from countries where CRS serves with people in her own community. "For us they are recipes for Lent, an option for our dishes. But for our brothers and sisters around the world, it is a meal that may be the only one they have in the day," she says. Alejandra also looks for opportunities to raise money to support CRS programs that fight hunger and malnutrition. To benefit CRS, every summer she plans a concert with music, food, raffles and speakers who share stories of solidarity.

Alejandra has discovered that her vocation was not to be a nun, but to serve the Church in a different way by

motivating others to act on behalf of the most vulnerable people. And when she speaks, her passion and commitment to those in need are undeniable. "Let us be supportive and bring hope to our brothers and sisters most in need. We have our faith that leads us to action," she says.

In his encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, St. John Paul II reminds us that solidarity "is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good."

To combat hunger and malnutrition, people like Alejandra are needed: men and women committed to the common good, aware of the reality of our brothers and sisters who are hungry, and with the courage to promote change.

Together, we can lead the way to a world without hunger.

**Join us at crs.org/leadtheway
and by texting LEAD NOW to 306-44**