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CRS Introduces Photo of the Month for Catholic Media

CRS will provide a photo of the month beginning in the month of May. These photos will illustrate current news stories and be accompanied by a caption to be released for use by Catholic media newspapers and websites. Distribution will happen each month on the 15th. This special collection will grow as photos are added and can be used as deemed appropriate by editors. [Click here to read more.](#)

CRS Global Emergency Snapshot in English and Spanish

Catholic Relief Services teams and partners continue to provide comprehensive emergency relief to hundreds of thousands of people who have been uprooted due to conflict within their countries. This update provides the latest reports on CRS efforts in Ecuador, Ethiopia, the Central African Republic, Europe, and the Middle East. You may read the *CRS Global Emergency Snapshot* document in [English](#) or [Spanish](#).

CRS West Regional Parish Ambassadors Gather in Seattle

CRS Parish Ambassadors gathered in Seattle for a post-Easter retreat and training on April 30th as they embarked on the second half of their first year as a prototype of the CRS Parish Ambassador Corps (PAC). They gathered to pray, share stories on their global solidarity actions in their parishes and learn



Photo credit: CRS Staff

from each other. Highlights of the day included hearing of one parish's incredible response to the CRS Collection – over \$35,000 raised! – thanks to the Parish Ambassadors' efforts; an exciting new collaboration between one parish's Knights of Columbus and Rice Bowl during Lenten fish fries, which resulted in community-building and more learning. Several people from various parishes across the archdiocese who are considering joining PAC participated in the morning sessions which included a Year of Mercy Pilgrimage from CRS. The Archdiocese of Seattle has eleven parishes participating in PAC, with plans to expand to eighteen over the next year.

NEWS from the Southwest Regional Office

CRS Southwest's 2016 Regional Gathering in San Antonio TX

The Southwest Regional team hosted its Regional Gathering focused on the theme of *Living Mercy/ Viviendo la misericordia*. The 16 CRS partners reflecting, learning and planning for CRS engagement represented 14 dioceses, one diocesan Hispanic center, and leaders of Region X's Directors of Hispanic Ministry and Pastoral Juvenil Hispana (Hispanic young adult ministry).

An area of focus was to dialogue and build skills on how to effectively communicate mercy & CRS' mission and work in that context. Paul Eagle, Vice President, Marketing and Communications was invited to give an overview of CRS' Marketing/ Communication strategy, to develop partner's skills for communicating with other diocesan leaders and with parishioners, and to give specific hints on how to respond with mercy to the false attacks against CRS (for example, the ones coordinated by Lepanto Institute). Many CRS Southwest Diocesan Directors expressed that they had to spend a significant time responding to misinformation about CRS in their respective dioceses.



Other sessions included: outreach to clergy; CRS resources in English and Spanish and how best to access those resources; and a "learning session" of talking circles – that is, small-group exploration of a topic (Hispanic outreach, youth / young adult / campus ministry outreach, parish solidarity partnerships with a parish or institution in another country, and how to develop in others leadership for solidarity).

NEWS from the West Regional Office

Rice Bowl Grants for Gardens in Laos and Seattle

Archdiocese of Seattle Diocesan Directors, Kelly Hickman and J.L. Drouhard, while traveling to Southeast Asia in January visited CRS staff and partners in Laos, where they learned about the LEAPS project featured in this year's CRS Rice Bowl video and resource materials. One among many discoveries is they found out that schools there apply to CRS for a garden grant to provide vegetables to supplement their new lunch programs. The process and dollar amount to their surprise matched the CRS Rice Bowl garden grants program in the Archdiocese. Kelly and J.L. used the trip's experience and *Laudato Si'* to educate and promote Lent and applications from schools and parishes for garden grants have tripled. (Photo: Kelly Hickman and CRS Laos staffer, Vatvisa Keosalivong, in a school garden)



The Encuentro Process in the CRS Northeast Mid-Atlantic Region is in Full Swing

The Encuentro is a three-year process of consultation in dioceses and parishes led by the Hispanic community to answer the question: *What should be our Church's response to the presence of the Hispanic community?* At this point in the process, each episcopal region is forming regional and diocesan teams that will facilitate the consultation in parishes. Region II, (8 dioceses in the state of New York), gathered March 29-31st in Huntington, New York, where 45 representatives working on Hispanic and other diocesan ministries came together to train diocesan teams. Region I (New England) held a meeting on April 14th with 30 diocesan representatives in attendance. This region will hold trainings on May 29th in Norwich, CT and June 18th in Manchester, NH. The Region III (New Jersey, Delaware and Pennsylvania) gathered on April 23 in Trenton, New Jersey. Approximately seventy participants attended for a day of fellowship, music, prayer, and learning. CRS representatives Mari Barboza and Cheryl Mrazik attended all gatherings. CRS Northeast/Mid-Atlantic looks forward to accompanying Region III and the other regions in NE/MA throughout the Encuentro process.



St. Johns 1st Solidarity Festival Shows Catholic Social Teaching in Action

Immigrant workers shared stories of wage theft and exploitation with college students April 16 at the first Solidarity Festival to be held on the campus of Vincentian-run St. John's University in the Queens borough of New York.

Professor Meghan Clark, organizer for the festival stated that it was an effort to engage students in a conversation about local and global worker justice. Professor Clark's students worked in teams and used material and interactive programs from Catholic Relief Services and other agencies for their culminating projects and case studies of companies that provide fair-trade versions of popular products. For the full story, visit: <http://catholicphilly.com/2016/04/news/national-news/aim-of-solidarity-festival-to-show-catholic-social-teaching-in-action/>

Cabrini High School Participates in "Unaccompanied Minors: Refugees Seeking Safety" Simulation

Cabrini High School juniors participated in the "Unaccompanied Minors: Refugees Seeking Safety" simulation developed by Cabrini College Catholic Relief Services Ambassadors to increase understanding and awareness of the plight of unaccompanied minors fleeing South and Central American countries.

The program was created and implemented by Cabrini College CRS Student Ambassadors who visited from Radnor, Pennsylvania. As part of the Cabrini College CRS goals and a course on the Common Good, the college students designed a simulation focusing on the specific immigration issue of the many unassisted children seeking refuge and safety in the U.S.



Hani El-Mahdi Discusses the Humanitarian Crisis Facing Iraq

On April 19, 2016, Hani El-Mahdi, head of CRS Iraq, gave a presentation discussing the humanitarian crisis facing Iraq and how our Church through CRS and Caritas is responding. He met with 60 students, faculty and community members at The Catholic University of America. Both the Archdiocese of Washington's El Pregonero Spanish-language newspaper and The Catholic University, which is now a CRS Global Campus, provided media coverage of the event and encouraged constituents' generous support of CRS' relief efforts.



Hani El-Mahdi with students . Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Bridgeman / The Catholic University of America.

Bishop Peter Rosazza Social Justice Conference – Archdiocese of Hartford

The Archdiocese of Hartford's Office for Catholic Social Justice Ministry will host its 7th **Bishop Peter Rosazza Social Justice Conference**, "Rooted in Faith: Caring for Our Common Home," on **Saturday, June 11** from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm at St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield.

The keynote speaker is Sr. Damien Marie Savino, F.S.E., Ph.D., Chair of Department of Environmental Science & Studies of the University of St. Thomas. Sr. Savino will explore Pope Francis' ideas in *Laudato Si'* on how we are to heed the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. For information, call (860) 242-5573 or visit <http://wsocialjustice.org/social-justice-conference.html>

PROGRAM AND RESOURCE UNIT NEWS

CRS RICE BOWL NEWS



Thank You!

Because of your support, we have changed lives!! Check out all the new *Thank You Resources* and the *New Transmittal Portal* information in the [CRS Rice Bowl Newsletter for May/April 2016](#) and much more.

Fight Global Hunger with a CRS Helping Hands Event

CRS HELPING HANDS MISSION

Recognizing Jesus Christ's call to love our neighbor, Catholic Relief Services Helping Hands serves the vulnerable in two ways: We provide food for immediate hunger relief, and fund income-generating projects to prevent hunger in the long term. Hosting a CRS Helping Hands event is fun, educational and inspirational. Young and old come together for an hour or two, standing shoulder to shoulder to package nutritious meals for people suffering from food shortages. View the Helping Hands [webpage](#) and preview the [flyer](#) for complete information.

PARTNERSHIP TRAINING AND ENGAGEMENT UNIT NEWS

The CRS Global High School Program aims for participation by 10% of Catholic secondary schools in US in the second year of the program

At the National Catholic Educational Association Convention in April of 2015, CRS launched a Global High School program, offering opportunities for secondary schools to join with CRS to educate about Catholic social teaching and advocate for solidarity with the global poor.



The CRS Global High School program celebrates what Catholic high schools are already doing to encourage global solidarity and provides resources, programs and opportunities to strengthen their commitment to live out Catholic identity and form missionary disciples. Participating high schools can choose their level of commitment by selecting Silver (CORE)-, Gold-, or Platinum-level engagement.

The Global High School program reached its projected target for engagement in its first year - 5% of Catholic Secondary Schools in the United States - 60 schools and over 40,000 participants. The program has been well received by schools. As the GHS Coordinator at one Lasallian School explained, *"Getting these weekly and monthly updates from Catholic Relief Services is the antidote to the isolation and hopelessness so many high school students feel when they are made aware of global injustices."* In addition to celebrating the high schools, a component of the program includes a celebration of two graduating seniors from each school as "Global Advocates." After only two weeks of the application being live on the website, 32 free Global Advocate medals have been requested by Global High Schools for distribution at graduations across the country.

Resources continue to be developed and updated on the GHS website. Contact the [CRS regional office for your state](#) or the U.S. Operations Call Center at 1-866-608-5978 with questions. To register a Catholic high school or for more information about the GHS program, visit ghs.crs.org.

Jack Jezreel, Founder of JustFaith Ministries, is available to offer workshops and presentations to help you get JustFaith going in your church or region. One of the most sought-after national speakers on the connection between faith and compassion, Jack has given promotional workshops all over the country. Those who have heard him speak will attest to his energy and inspiration . . . and impact. It is not uncommon for many churches and parishes to register for one or more programs immediately after hearing Jack. For more information about cost and calendar, contact Maggie at maggie@justfaith.org or [502-429-0865 x 222](tel:5024290865).



Registration is open for the 2016 National Council of Catholic Women's (NCCW) Annual Convention on September 7 - 10, 2016 in Indianapolis, IN. This year's theme is *Catholic Women: Instruments of Mercy*

NCCW continues to work with CRS to support the Works of Peace and Reconciliation. [Click here](#) to go to CRS website for more information about this partnership of 70 years.

Contact Us

- [CRS Regional Offices](#)
- Email: resources@crs.org
- CRS U.S. Operations Call Center—1-866-608-5978

CRS University Partnering with KROC Institute

CRS University is partnering with the [Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies](#) at the University of Notre Dame, and the [Catholic Peacebuilding Network](#) this fall to develop a selection of course modules on Catholic peacebuilding for the CRS [Faculty Learning Commons program](#).

At the heart of the social mission of the Catholic Church is a call to work for justice and peace. Cultivating just and peaceful societies is part of our CRS mission and an essential component of integral human development. These FLC modules will help students and faculty learn from cutting-edge Catholic peacebuilding work in South Sudan, Colombia, and the Philippines.

In 2015 in Quito, Ecuador, CRS held a major global summit to begin a process to strategically integrate peacebuilding across ALL sectors of our integral human development work including emergency response. You can watch highlights from this summit [here](#) for an overview of our peacebuilding work.

The course materials will also draw on the academic expertise of the Kroc Institute for Peace Studies and the Catholic Peacebuilding Network, globally recognized thought leaders in peacebuilding. The modules examine how the Catholic community, one of the world's largest and most influential religious actors, places its rich intellectual and spiritual tradition, enormous institutional capacity, and people power at the service of peace.

[Preview Peacebuilding Resources & Sign Up >](#)



The four distinct online modules introduce students to:

- [An overview of Catholic peacebuilding,](#)
- [The Church's role in peace processes,](#)
- [Transitional justice and reconciliation, and](#)
- [Interreligious peacebuilding.](#)

In doing so, we will emphasize (1) the "living" nature of the tradition – the link between theory and practice, principles and policy; and (2) the importance of grounding peacebuilding in an understanding of Christian vocation.

Specific course content, including videos, articles, case studies, and book excerpts will be made available soon at [this link](#). The sessions will be designed with an inter-disciplinary lens intended for incorporation across a variety of areas of academic study.

[Register your class\(es\) now](#) for these sessions.

CRS University Engagement's SALT Summit Reaches Capacity

CRS University Engagement is thrilled to announce that we have reached capacity for our summer 2016 SALT (Student Ambassador Leaders Together) Summit. We look forward to welcoming 120 students and staff from 46 colleges and universities around the country to Baltimore for 3 days of dynamic skill-building, collaboration, impact, and stories from the field. Learn more about the SALT Summit [here](#) or about getting involved with the CRS Student Ambassador program [here](#).



New Catholic Relief Services Resources

The CRS Resource Center (<http://www.crs.org/get-involved/resource-center>) offers an array of resources from a global perspective for all faith communities.



[Service Trip Resources](#)

Leading a service trip this summer? Our guide for service immersion helps a facilitator prepare, lead, and re-orient groups taking international service immersion trips.

[Ethiopia Drought](#)

In Ethiopia, El Niño has affected weather patterns in the region and two failed rainy seasons have resulted in poor harvest. These [resources](#) suggest ways that faith communities in the United States can live out the Corporal Work of Mercy to “feed the hungry” in Ethiopia.

[Ecuador Earthquake](#)

CRS is responding to the 7.8-magnitude earthquake struck Ecuador’s coastal region on Saturday, April 16 and CRS. Use these resources to pray, learn, act and give to people in need.



[Care for Creation Resources](#)

June marks the one-year anniversary of the release of Laudato Si’, Pope Francis’ encyclical on the environment. This is a great chance to share about our Church’s teaching about Care for God’s Creation online and in parish bulletins.

For additional information on these and other resources please contact the [CRS regional office for your state](#) or the CRS U.S. Operations Call Center at 1-866-608-5978.

You Did it for Me!

[You Did It for Me](#) is an exciting joint venture between Catholic Charities USA and Catholic Relief Services that are brief good news stories of the Church in action across America and around the world. **A new feature is available!** A “how to” e-brochure answers questions and offers suggestions on how to use the stories is available on CRS.org/you-did-it-for-me. It easily explains the download features with step-by-step directions for church bulletins, websites, newsletters, even for Facebook and Twitter. Please visit CRS.org/you-did-it-for-me for the e-brochure and a sign-up form if you’re not already receiving these wonderful stories. Share with all!! If you have questions, send them to bulletinstories@crs.org.

Jacklyn Ireland, communications specialist for the U.S. Operations Partnership, Training and Engagement Unit, produces the bi-monthly newsletter for our partners and constituents in the United States. If you would like others in your organization to be added to our mailing list, please contact the U.S. Operations Call Center at 1-866-608-5978 or send an email to: resources@crs.org.