



DIOCESE OF METUCHEN

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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

February 23, 2022

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Each year during Lent, we focus in an intentional way on turning away from sin and instead turning our hearts over more fully to the Lord. In these 40 days of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, we are indeed met with challenges, yet it is through these challenges that we are able to grow even closer to our Heavenly Father.

As we mark the start of our 40-day Lenten journey – in this same year that we are celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the establishment of the Diocese of Metuchen – I cannot help but be reminded of our diocese's own 40-year journey. Our diocese certainly has been blessed in these past 40 years, but we have had our share of challenges too. Gratefully, these challenges have led us to cling more closely to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and His Blessed Mother.

This Lenten season, I am asking all the faithful in our diocese to commit to doing 40 works of mercy. We have over 630,000 Catholics in the Diocese of Metuchen, so if each one could commit to doing 40 works of mercy, together we will have fulfilled over 25 million works of mercy. Can you imagine what a blessing that would be to our local Church and what a witness that would be to our local communities! What a wonderful way to celebrate our anniversary and give thanks to God!

One of the works you, your family, or your school or parish community might consider is participating in Catholic Relief Services' Rice Bowl campaign. Each year through the CRS Rice Bowl, we are invited to reflect on the needs of our sisters and brothers, both here and around the world, and to consider how we might respond to their needs. Through stories, videos and other resources, we learn about the global issue of hunger and malnutrition and our Gospel call to help those experiencing these affronts to human dignity. I invite you to visit crsricebowl.org or crsplatodearroz.org to learn more and to find additional resources. If you have any questions about CRS Rice Bowl, please contact Deacon Peter Barcellona at pbarcellona@diometuchen.org.

Through these 40 works of mercy, throughout these 40 days of our Lenten journey, and in this celebratory year marking 40 years of our diocese, my hope and prayer is that we will turn our hearts over more fully to one another and, most importantly, to the Lord. Please know of my love and prayers for you and your families and I ask that you please pray for me too. May this Lenten season be for us a time of grace and provide for us a moment of encounter with the Lord and each other. Blessed Lent!

With renewed best wishes, I remain

Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend James F. Checchio, JCD, MBA
Bishop of Metuchen