**Sample Bishop’s Letter**

*May be read from the pulpit or inserted into the parish bulletins.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Soon, our diocese will take up the Catholic Relief Services Collection. The Catholic Relief Services Collection funds six Catholic agencies that work to serve our suffering brothers and sisters around the world. Through humanitarian aid, resettling displaced individuals and families, and providing legal and advocacy services for migrants, the Catholic Relief Services Collection allows us to see every encounter with a person who is suffering as an opportunity to **help** **Jesus in disguise**.

In late 2012, a civil war erupted in the Central African Republic, resulting in a government takeover by a rebel leader whose militia included many mercenaries. At a certain point, the new rebel government could not pay their militia, so the mercenaries retaliated by attacking and pillaging the country, targeting many Christians. This violence continued into 2014.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Office of International Justice and Peace (IJP) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) worked with the Church in the Central African Republic to raise awareness and advocate for those who were suffering. As a result of their intervention, the United States committed $101 million for Africa Union Peacekeepers and $30 million for humanitarian assistance. The number of African Union Peacekeepers was increased from 1,200 to almost 6,000. Through projects like these, IJP and CRS help the Church stop violence and seek assistance for those whose lives have been destroyed by conflict.

Religious Immigration Services (RIS), a division of Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC), helps members of religious communities navigate the complicated system of visa requirements and immigration laws. In the United States, a community of three elderly sisters faced declining health, which made it difficult for them to carry out the activities of the convent and to travel for doctor’s appointments. RIS advocates helped this community bring two younger sisters over from the Philippines. These new sisters will be able to take care of the convent and help the older sisters continue their religious service.

CRS and CLINIC are two of the six worldwide Catholic relief agencies funded by the Catholic Relief Services Collection. These agencies work each day to provide food, water, disaster relief, and other vital assistance to Jesus in the disguise of suffering people.

Please be generous in the Catholic Relief Services Collection. Your support truly makes a difference.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*(Bishop’s name, title, and signature)*

For more information on the Catholic Relief Services Collection and the organizations it supports,
please visit *www.usccb.org* (search “Catholic Relief Services Collection”).