



**Cross Catholic
OUTREACH**

Delivering Food, Shelter and Hope to the Poorest of the Poor

Water for Life

Pray. Fast. Share a Glass.

— Africa —

Inside, learn how your parish
can be a blessing to girls like Glory,
shown here in Chilipapa, Malawi.



Pour Out Hope Beyond All Imagination

“Do children in America also collect water from rivers and streams?”

Patricia posed this heartbreaking question when we recently visited her family in Chilipapa, an isolated village in the mountains overlooking Lake Malawi. Surely, she thought, children everywhere must endure the same water woes. Don't they also trip and scrape their knees while carrying heavy buckets up steep and rocky paths? Aren't they constantly catching painful illnesses like typhoid and dysentery? And doesn't the dirty water leave them too sick and too tired to keep up with schoolwork?

Just as many of us couldn't imagine drinking water from this dirty stream, Patricia cannot yet fathom what life would be like to have easy access to safe, clean water. With your parish's help, Patricia and many other girls in sub-Saharan Africa won't have to imagine it — they'll be living a bold new reality where clean water is readily available in their communities.

An Opportunity To Change Lives Forever

This Lent, we invite your parish to pray, fast and share a glass of safe, abundant water, linking arms with

Cross Catholic Outreach and the Church in Africa to drill community wells — giving families clean and abundant water for life.





Patricia scoops water at the Chahuwa Stream, her family's source of water for drinking, cooking, bathing and cleaning.



Outreach Campaign Summary

Description

The *Water for Life* outreach campaign empowers your parish community to tap into the Lenten pillars of prayer, fasting and almsgiving to change lives forever in sub-Saharan Africa. The alms collected will bring clean, safe water systems to remote villages where families currently rely on contaminated rivers, streams and hand-dug pits, while also supporting health and spiritual initiatives.

Campaign Goal

\$5,243,562 is needed to bless 238,903 people with a lifetime supply of clean water along with other life-changing interventions to bless families in body, mind and spirit.

Campaign Highlights



WATER & HEALTH

- Build 145 community water systems tailored to local needs, ranging from low-maintenance hand-pump boreholes to solar water systems with elephant-resistant elevated storage tanks.
- Train families in sanitation and hygiene practices and create water committees in each community to protect and maintain water sources.
- Build a health center, offer mobile medical clinics, provide medical supplies, and construct latrines in rural Malawi.
- Ship health supplies such as medicines, vitamins, diapers and blankets for orphaned children and vulnerable families in Eswatini and Zambia.



SPIRITUAL OUTREACH

- Provide Bibles and catechism books and offer ecumenical workshops in Malawi.
- Offer prayer and Bible study workshops for community leaders and provide Bibles to families in Zambia.



A girl approaches the water kiosk in the village of Sultan Hamud in Kenya's Diocese of Machakos.

Share *Water for Life* this Lent and transform lives forever in sub-Saharan Africa!



Locations and Partners

Ghana

Father Francis Bomansa was ordained the Bishop of Wa in August 2024. The diocese is located in Ghana's Upper West Region where farming families endure a lengthy dry season from October through May.

Ethiopia

The Ethiopian Catholic Church has a goal of constructing water points in villages in the Bakelo and Saria areas of the Amhara Region in the northern part of the country.

Kenya

Father Fabian Hevi leads Good Samaritan Water Sanitation Services, and this year, his goal is to build solar-powered water systems across four dioceses. We are also working with Living Water Service Centre in the Diocese of Nyahururu.

Malawi

Bishop Martin Anwel Mtumbuka leads the Diocese of Karonga and Bishop John Alphonsus Ryan leads the Diocese of Mzuzu. These northern Malawi dioceses border Lake Malawi, one of Africa's Great Lakes, but the water is contaminated with parasitic worms and other dangerous pathogens.

Zambia

Bishop Joseph Sampa Kasonde leads the Diocese of Solwezi, Bishop George Cosmas Zumaire Lungu leads the Diocese of Chipata, and Sister Prisca Matenga is superior general of the Daughters of the Redeemer, a Catholic order with a strong presence in the Diocese of Kabwe. The nation is a hotbed for cholera and other dangerous waterborne illnesses.

Eswatini

Challenge Ministries Swaziland was founded in 1997 in response to the overwhelming needs of orphans and children living on the streets. This small, landlocked nation suffers from the world's highest HIV/AIDS rate, with 1 in 4 people infected (Source: United Nations).







The Need: Thirsting for Christ's Hope

Tumse Mwaijumba is a grandmother to seven boys. She prays for a granddaughter to join the family one day — but not yet. Not when she knows the lifelong hardships girls face when there is no clean water.

Where Tumse lives in Chilonga Village, Malawi, women and girls are typically responsible for the backbreaking household task of water collection. Tumse herself began carrying a small bucket of water when she was just 5 years old, and she's done it nearly every day since, often making five trips each day to the Chilonga River. Her knees are swollen and painful from years of enduring this, but the chore is necessary because her family needs this water to survive.

Tragically, the water Tumse's family relies on magnifies her suffering because it is heavily polluted with elephant dung from a wildlife preserve and fertilizer chemicals dumped in the river by commercial rice plantations. Women and girls attempt to reduce the contaminants by digging into the mud and allowing water to filter upward, but the water they draw is still filthy and sour smelling.

Collecting this contaminated water is just half the battle. Next, Tumse must begin her journey home, starting with climbing up a steep embankment while balancing a heavy bucket on her head. Then, it's time to boil the water and cool it to room temperature. All in all, it takes about five hours to process a single bucket of water. Sometimes, family members are so thirsty they cannot wait. Children from her village often head to the river with a cup so they can drink straight from the polluted source.

Thankfully, Cross Catholic Outreach's ministry partners in sub-Saharan Africa are eager to address the water and health needs in Chilonga Village and other communities. With your parish's help, dirty water will no longer threaten lives.

Tumse is one of the 238,903 beneficiaries your parish can help bless with clean water through the *Water for Life* outreach program. Visit our photo gallery at [CrossCatholic.org/Lent-parishes](https://www.crosscatholic.org/Lent-parishes) to learn more about water needs and how you can inspire generosity.



At left, Tumse collects water alongside her neighbor, Ester Halawa.



A Solution Rooted in Catholic Social Teaching

In the developing world, a well is not especially noteworthy in itself. You can find a good number of them — busted and dry or only working during the rainy season. Some have covers. Some are open. Some were dug by men with shovels. Most are far too shallow to be effective or safe.

What is noteworthy is when you encounter a well that has been drilled and installed properly. For example, our Kenyan partner, Fr. Fabian, ensures that wells are professionally drilled to at least 200 meters deep and are equipped with a solar-powered pump, an elevated storage tank (or tanks) and a secure water distribution kiosk.

In Kisimenyi Village, Kenya, the local parish priest, Father Moses, describes the changes in the community since a water system was installed as unbelievable. Parishioners arrive at Mass filled with joy, and families no longer have to walk or ride a bike 9 miles — going through a national park full of wild animals — just to fill their water cans.

“This water has transformed the community. All of us. It has empowered us. We can have veggies and a garden to support ourselves, thanks to this borehole.”

Regina water committee member



“This has helped us with our education of our children. The children don’t lose all of their time fetching water for the house or for the school — and they have more time to study and be kids.”

Mary water committee member



“This is changing the economies of our families. Previously, we spent a lot of money on water, and so much time. But now that it is here close by, we have more time, and the water is fresh and clean, so our health is better. We aren’t suffering from diarrhea, cholera or bilharzia like before.”

Brian local resident





Fr. Fabian (4th from right) joins residents as they wash their hands at a water distribution kiosk in the Archdiocese of Mombasa, Kenya.

Project Plan

Your Lenten almsgiving will set in motion a series of steps resulting in safe, abundant water! This generally includes:

1. Villages most in need of clean, safe water are selected through a local nomination process. This often involves collaboration between Church leaders, village chiefs and medical professionals.
2. The land is surveyed to determine the ideal location for a community water system.
3. Plans are finalized based on local needs, whether it's for a simple hand-pump community well or a solar-powered water tower.
4. A professional crew drills to the proper depth, ensuring water will flow even during the peak of the dry season.
5. Villages elect a committee to oversee the care and sustainability of the water source, and families are trained in sanitation and hygiene practices.
6. Families contribute a small payment to their local water committee to cover future maintenance needs. This ensures clean, abundant water will flow for many years to come.

Beyond Water

Your parish's contribution will do much more than provide a safe, reliable source of water. It will allow families to go from surviving to thriving — with improved health and more time for school, worship, family bonding and income-generating activities. This project plan includes supportive initiatives for health, education and spiritual outreach to give families the best opportunity to break the cycle of poverty.

AFTER





Sharing a Glass Changes Everything

October 2023 is a month Anganile will never forget. That's when a drilling rig came to her village in the Diocese of Karonga, Malawi, forever freeing her from the dangers of dirty water.

"I used to get tired at school," she reflected. "And I used to get sick a lot. Malaria, diarrhea, headaches. Now I get to school early, and my health has improved."

What is Anganile's favorite change since October 2023?

"I have time to play!"

Anganile (shown left) and her mother, Agnes Simkonda (shown right), used to spend four hours each day lugging heavy buckets of water from a distant river — with Agnes also carrying her youngest daughter, Olipa, on her back. Now, the same task can be done in just five minutes!

"I'm very happy as a mother," whispered Agnes, as tears of joy brimmed in her eyes. "The gift of water has set my children free. They are no longer burdened."

Agnes says that having a clean water source close to home has helped her become a more attentive wife and mother. One of her greatest joys now is having the time to help her children with their homework.

"We were on the ground thanking God when we heard that we would be receiving a borehole," said Agnes. "We couldn't believe it was coming during our lifetime. What a blessing!"

Surely, the Lord who lived and walked among us compels us now to share clean water with many more families who thirst for a similar blessing. This is our opportunity to pray, fast and give alms so girls can have the time to embrace childhood joys like Anganile now does. This is our opportunity to be his instruments of mercy by providing help.



Agnes and baby Olipa at the family's old water source.

At left, Anganile operates the easy-to-use hand pump at the well in Chankholombe Village, Malawi.



Christ's Hope Overflows Through Your Parish's Generosity



Right Reverend Yohane Suzgo Nyirenda, auxiliary bishop of Mzuzu, joins Beki at the new well in Magonera Village.

illnesses. Magonera Village was near the top of the list. In 2023, with the support of Cross Catholic Outreach donors, the diocese drilled and installed a hand-pump well in the village, and there hasn't been a single cholera case in the community ever since.

"We have been redeemed from death!" Ellen proclaimed. "My life has completely changed now that I have clean, safe water. So much has changed."

Her expression shifted to one of determination when we asked about the water situation in nearby villages.

"We still need more boreholes in the area," she said. "Our neighbors do not have a borehole, and we feel for them. People die so fast from cholera. Many cannot afford the drip hydration treatment at the hospital. I pray that other villages will have access to [clean water] services so people don't die before their time."

Ellen Phiri has not experienced any waterborne illnesses since her village received a community water system.

The alms your parish contributes to the *Water for Life* campaign have the power to save lives. Ellen and Beki are a testament to this.

The two are opposites in many ways. Ellen is a grandmother while Beki is a teenager. Ellen loves to dance and sing; Beki is mild mannered and hopes to qualify to join the Malawian army. One thing unites them, though — they are both cholera survivors.

Magonera Village has long been a hotspot for this terrible illness spread through bacteria-infested water. Once infected, cholera can kill within hours. For those who must endure the painful symptoms at home, only 50 percent survive. Sadly, one of Beki's grandmothers didn't make it after she became infected.

Malawi's Diocese of Mzuzu uses data from hospitals and health centers to pinpoint the villages with the highest incidences of cholera and other waterborne





Getting Started Is Easy With These Free Promotional Items

Contact us to request your free materials!

cscd@crosscatholic.org • 800-914-2420, ext. 158

Digital downloads available at CrossCatholic.org/Lent-parishes



• Kickoff Letter

Introduce parishioners to *Water for Life* with a letter that can be added to your bulletin, mailed or emailed from your pastor or other parish leader.

• Video

Our brief, engaging video showcases real footage from remote villages in sub-Saharan Africa that your parish can bless. The footage tells the story of the challenges families face while upholding their dignity.

• Poster

Put your giving goal on full display to generate enthusiasm and unite your parish in the Church's social teachings, including our longstanding preferential option for the poor and vulnerable.

• Activity Guide for Children and Families NEW DESIGN FOR LENT 2025!

We've redesigned our activity book to give families new Lent activities, crafts and a meat-free recipe, and all activities are also available online! This guide is ideal for Catholic schools, homeschoolers and faith formation programs or anyone with children looking to strengthen their Lenten experience and teach about world poverty.

• Church Bulletin Insert

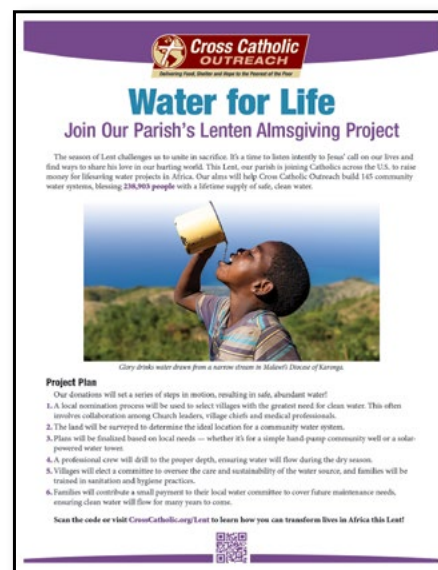
This insert easily fits inside your Sunday bulletin and will inspire parishioners to "Pray, Fast and Share a Glass" this Lenten season.

• Social Media Toolkit

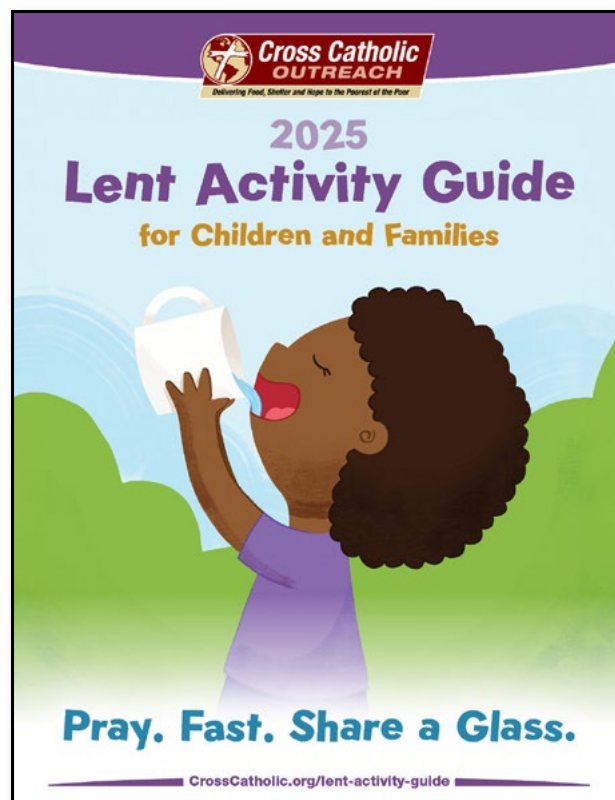
These sample social media posts make it easy for you to engage with parishioners online — and show the watching world the transforming impact of Church ministries.

After the project is complete, participating parishes will receive an update that shares how lives have been transformed.

BULLETIN INSERT



ACTIVITY GUIDE





Why Partner With Cross Catholic Outreach?



The youngest generation grows in faith during Mass at St. Anne's Parish in Chilumba Village, Malawi.

1. We are approved by the Holy Father as an official Catholic charity.

Cross Catholic Outreach is approved by the Holy Father as an official Catholic charity and has received multiple Vatican endorsements. We are currently endorsed by and affiliated with the Dicastery for the Service of Charity, also known as the Office of the Papal Almoner. This dicastery provides mercy and aid to the poor, vulnerable and excluded in the name of the Roman Pontiff. The first Prefect of the Dicastery for the Service of Charity is the Papal Almoner, His Eminence Cardinal Konrad Krajewski.

2. We transform lives materially and spiritually for the glory of Jesus Christ.

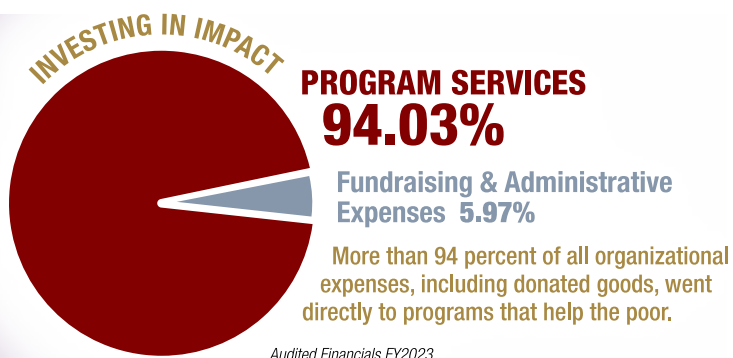
We serve the poorest of the poor around the world by channeling aid through dioceses, parishes and Catholic missionaries. This cost-effective approach helps break the cycle of poverty while advancing Catholic evangelization.

3. Our ministry is rooted in Catholic social teaching — a mission we can all believe in.

As the Catechism of the Catholic Church explains: “To receive in truth the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognize Christ in the poorest, his brethren (no. 1397).” We follow Jesus’ example of helping the poor in accordance with Catholic doctrine on human dignity and the common good.

4. We believe in financial accountability.

Cross Catholic Outreach pledges to be fully accountable to donors for the use of funds — respecting donors’ intents in the use of their gifts — and we will provide complete documentation to those who support this Work of Mercy.



For additional details and free Lenten outreach program materials, visit

CrossCatholic.org/Lent-parishes



Tiange enjoys a glass of clean water in Chankholombe Village, Malawi.

This Lent, Share Water for Life

It is no accident that water is a central metaphor in our Catholic faith. From Bible verses to the Catechism to the Sacrament of Baptism, water is an instrument and sign of purification, conversion, rebirth, renewal and God's merciful provision.

This Lent, your parish can pray, fast and share a glass of lifegiving water to children and families who thirst for the hope of our risen Christ. Let's unleash a wave of compassion to fill their cups!

Suggested Gifts

- **\$8,190 Gift of Solidarity**
Brings clean water to 390 people
- **\$4,095 Gift of Prayer**
Brings clean water to 195 people
- **\$2,625 Gift of Sacrifice**
Brings clean water to 125 people
- **\$1,575 Gift of Peace**
Brings clean water to 75 people

Any contribution will be a life-transforming blessing to a family in need of clean water!

And whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple — truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”

MATTHEW 10:42



Cross Catholic OUTREACH

Delivering Food, Shelter and Hope to the Poorest of the Poor

Our Mission

We mobilize the global Catholic Church to transform the poor and their communities materially and spiritually for the glory of Jesus Christ.

How We Serve

Rather than create new institutions to distribute aid, we support existing ministries and churches already serving the poor. In addition to being the most cost-effective way of helping the poor, empowering these ministries allows us to support the Church's spiritual mission and its important position of leadership in poor communities.

Good Stewardship

We consider every gift we receive as a precious resource from God. We direct every donation to its intended project, provide honest and accurate reports to our donors, and keep overhead costs to an industry low. We handle funds with utmost integrity and hold our ministry partners in the field to the same high standards by asking them to document costs and the impact of their outreach.



Our Promise to You!

Donations from this campaign will be used to cover any expenditures for this project incurred through June 30, 2025, the close of our ministry's fiscal year. In the event that more funds are raised than needed to fully fund the project, the excess funds, if any, will be used to meet the most urgent needs of the ministry.

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