So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.

John 13:14
We are a Catholic ministry

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

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.

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.

We invite you to join with us as we seek to transform the lives of the poor materially and spiritually — ways that please the Father and glorify him in Heaven and on earth.
Description
This project will bolster a diocesan social outreach to the poor by supporting critical operating costs.

Purpose
To lift the poor out of misery and hopelessness and give them a life-changing encounter with Christ’s mercy.

Our Partner
The Caritas ministry of the Diocese of Santa Rosa de Lima.

Location
Cuilapa, the capital of the Santa Rosa department in southern Guatemala.

Cost
$104,500 is needed to support critical operating costs such as staff salaries, transportation and utilities.

Highlights
- Father Raul Monterroso’s Caritas outreach needs your help to bring material aid and spiritual hope to local communities beset by deep poverty.
- This ministry extends aid to areas that are isolated from government services and often feel forgotten and marginalized.
- Your gift through Cross Catholic Outreach will empower this ministry so that it can bless the needy with crucial services including:
  - Housing
  - Water
  - Education
  - Agriculture
  - Spiritual enrichment
- Please join us in strengthening this compassionate effort to extend God’s love to Guatemala’s poor and vulnerable!
The Need

Father Raul Monterroso knows the plight of the poor intimately. Growing up on a farm, he spent his childhood working alongside his father’s hired day laborers and sharing meals with them in the fields. These are people he understands — and sympathizes with deeply.

Today, the Guatemalan priest is frequently found walking along the dirt paths that lead to the poorest corners of his diocese. Barefoot children rush to meet him, and the haggard mothers he greets elicit his empathetic prayers. This man of God knows too well the daily miseries of the subsistence farmers who dwell in the mountains: their lack of running water, the dirt-floor shacks they call home, their struggles to meet even the most basic of human needs. Their lives are incredibly hard, and many yearn for a day without hunger or intestinal disease. But they lack the money and education to pursue better opportunities, and many feel too marginalized to even comprehend a future free from poverty.

It would be easy for Fr. Raul to approach these troubled villages expressing pity or despair, but he does neither. Instead, he is a messenger of hope who treats the poor with dignity and works tirelessly for their benefit. This makes him the kind of priest every Catholic can respect and support — a man who lives sacrificially and has a passion to serve the poor! Like Jesus humbling himself to the point of washing his disciples’ feet, Fr. Raul goes forth in a spirit of humility to tend to others’ needs.

Fr. Raul desires to bring hope and transformation to these suffering families… but he needs your help!
Ministry Description

Fr. Raul’s local Caritas ministry in the Diocese of Santa Rosa de Lima is working tirelessly to reach poor, rural communities with both physical and spiritual sustenance. He has a passion to spread the faith by building relationships with people on the margins of society and holistically addressing their greatest needs. Far from rote, stodgy religion, this is Christ in the flesh, moving through the smiles and sweaty brows and soiled hands of his earthly laborers to transform lives.

Fr. Raul’s vision is so compelling and so in tune with our own, that when we learned Caritas was in danger of shutting its doors, we launched a major effort to rehire Caritas’ staff, construct a new office and storage warehouse and multiply its outreach capacity.

With its infrastructure firmly in place, Caritas now seeks to answer the cries of the poor through several impactful programs — programs that can only move forward so long as caring Catholics like you step up to fund the ministries’ crucial operating costs.

**Housing**

The durable, concrete block houses Caritas builds bring an immediate and substantial rise in a family’s standard of living. The solid floor and waterproof roof give a level of comfort that just isn’t possible when a family’s only shelter is a flimsy shack cobbled together with mud, sticks and tarp. Metal doors provide ample security, while large shuttered windows let in light without compromising privacy. Each house is also wired for electricity and includes a sanitary latrine, a wash basin, and a clean-air stove that eliminates the problem of smoke inhalation.

**Water**

Clean water on tap at your own home may seem like a basic expectation, but in rural Guatemala, many communities depend on heavily contaminated streams, springs or hand-dug wells to quench their thirst. The result is frequent illness and chronic dehydration. Caritas solves this serious problem by installing communitywide systems that, for the first time ever, give these families easy access to clean, abundant water!
Education

Education is a key to escaping the cycle of poverty, but the poorest families often struggle to send their children to school. Caritas promotes school enrollment by granting scholarships to committed students, and also by distributing meals as an incentive for families to keep their kids in school. In one poor village, we even partnered with Caritas to build a new school building that was urgently needed.

Agriculture

Another way Caritas empowers families to improve their economic condition is by helping farmers increase their crop yields. Each beneficiary receives enough seeds and fertilizer to plant 1.74 acres of corn, plus citrus trees to add variety to their diets and contribute to reforestation. Training workshops are held, during which the beneficiaries learn environment conservation and are taught how to manage fruit trees, chicken and pig farms, and bean crops. This is a not a “hand out” but rather a “hand up!”

Spiritual enrichment

As Caritas selects families for material aid, it also promotes the multiplication and growth of Catholic lay groups throughout these poor communities. As a result of these groups, Catholics who don’t have regular weekly access to a priest are able to meet with other believers and receive spiritual nourishment from lay leaders and Eucharistic ministers. Fear and despair give way to faith and neighborly love.
Help Now!

Fr. Raul sees the incredible possibilities hidden in Guatemala’s poor rural villages — and with your help, he wants to unlock that potential, blessing everyone involved!

Though many of the families in his diocese have suffered unimaginable hardship, Fr. Raul believes Christ’s mercy can lead them out of that darkness and into a brighter future. Will you join Fr. Raul in this merciful journey and “wash the feet” of the poor so they may be freed from their suffering and elevated to a place of honor as human beings created in God’s image?

Your generous gift through Cross Catholic Outreach will help cover Caritas’ operating costs, such as salaries and transportation costs, so Fr. Raul and his staff can focus on the day to day work of ministering to these needy families and changing their lives. As you lift up this ministry, the poor who depend on it will be blessed with food, water, shelter, education, economic empowerment and spiritual nourishment.

Please help us stand in solidarity with Guatemala’s poor! Be the instrument through which God answers their desperate prayers and mends their hurts and pains. They will be so incredibly grateful for whatever you choose to give, and their lives will never be the same!

Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

Hebrews 13:16

Our Promise to You!

Proceeds from this campaign will be used to cover any expenditures for this project incurred through June 30, 2019, 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.