



MOST REVEREND
MICHAEL R. COTE, D.D.

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March 6, 2015

Mr. James J. Cavnar, President,
Cross Catholic Outreach
2700 N. Military Trail, Suite 240
PO Box 273908
Boca Raton, FL 33427-3908

Dear Jim,

Joining with my brother Bishops, I wholeheartedly commend Cross Catholic Outreach for its pastoral relief and development ministry to the poorest of the poor throughout the world. Acting upon the Gospel mandate to minister to the least of Christ's sisters and brothers and reflecting the teaching of Our Holy Father Pope Francis, Cross Catholic International models the dynamic missionary ministry that Pope Francis instructs us must be at the very foundation of all Church life and activity.

My association with Cross Catholic Outreach is a great source of joy. For through Cross' care for the poor and downtrodden, we are carrying out the mission Jesus gave to His disciples. It is that kind of joy of which Christ speaks in the Gospel of John. Christ's gift of joy emanates from modeling His life, pouring ourselves out for others as Jesus did for us on the Cross. The Lord's joy strengthens our faith and animates our witness to the Lord. In living the Gospel, Christ's joy fills our lives like no other happiness or pleasure can.

In the *Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis repeats the words taken from the Fifth General Conference of the Latin American and Caribbean Bishops of June 29, 2007, when he writes, we cannot passively and calmly wait in our Church buildings; "we need to move from a pastoral ministry of mere conservation to a decidedly missionary pastoral ministry."

Cross Catholic Outreach is a leader in "missionary pastoral ministry." With its focus on the Lord, Cross Catholic Outreach provides food, shelter, medical care, water, educating self-help programs, care for orphans, and emergency relief to the poorest of the poor in Dioceses around the world. All that Cross does is done in the Name of the Lord.

Cross' enthusiasm for its mission is as palpable as is the vitality that underlies all its activities in serving the poor. Pope Francis notes that kind of enthusiasm and vitality must characterize this "new phase of evangelization," this new missionary "going forth" into our world of need and deprivation commanded by Christ Himself. It is the world for which we have been given responsibility to share the Gospel in a joy-filled, convincing witness of love.

Your very effective witness sheds the light of Gospel upon that world. By following Jesus' example as He washes the feet of His disciples and by listening to His mandate to love one another as a sign of discipleship, Cross reaches out in a spirit of divine love to the destitute, the alienated, and the disenfranchised. Its outreach speaks more loudly than words of a commitment to ministry to the least of Jesus' sisters and brothers. Truly, Christ shows us what we must do and through its very effective outreach to the poor, the needy, and the deprived, Cross' outreach shows us how effectively the mission can be fulfilled. Cross strikes at the very heart of human need with the most effective means God gives us, the fruits of the gifts of faith, joy, and love.

As I wrote almost a decade ago, many of us never visit the Third World and look into the faces of the poor or see first-hand the bloated stomachs and emaciated bodies, or experience the haunting loneliness caused by deprivation. But all of us can do something about it by supporting spiritually and financially those who daily minister to the desperately needy and see in them the face of Jesus.

As I have before, I once again endorse Cross Catholic Outreach and its mission to the poor. May God strengthen your dedication and commitment to respond to the Lord's mandate to do for others – all others – as the Lord has done for us.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael R. Cote". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Michael R. Cote
Bishop of Norwich