From Ashes to Life
An update on our 2019 Lenten campaign to give shelter, quench thirst and empower Christ’s poor

— Dominican Republic —

Special Thank You!
CrossCatholic.org/AshesToLife
Thank you for fully funding this project!

They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat.

Revelation 7:16

Cover photo: Davian Santa (Azua Province) thanks generous benefactors like you for her beautiful new home.
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Thanks to you, little Francel’s mother just received a new home! (Read the full story on page 11.)
Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. 
Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing.

Psalm 100:1-2
From Ashes to Life | Project 3018

Executive Summary

Description
Last spring, we asked you to honor Christ’s suffering during the Lenten season by directing your almsgiving to bless and empower a wonderful Dominican bishop’s effort to alleviate poverty in his diocese.

Thanks to your generous support, Bishop José Grullón Estrella’s charitable mission, FUNDASEP, was able to successfully build sturdy homes and provide safe water to families who previously lived in crumbling shacks and had to rely on contaminated streams and rivers as their source for water.

In total, you helped us fund the construction of six water systems and 24 sturdy new houses, impacting 3,000 people throughout 15 communities. As of November 2019, all 24 houses and three of the six water systems have been completed.

Our Partner
FUNDASEP — the social outreach of the Catholic Diocese of San Juan de la Maguana — was founded by Bishop Grullón, who envisioned working hand-in-hand with the poor and mobilizing them to rise out of poverty. Throughout the course of the project, FUNDASEP was able to work alongside communities, teaching the beneficiaries how to form work brigades, hold meetings, and take long-term ownership of the efforts undertaken. FUNDASEP also coordinated with local parish priests, who conducted blessings, celebrated special Masses, led prayers and helped ensure that the greatest needs were being met.

Location
The project spanned the provinces of Azua, San Juan and Elias Piña in the Diocese of San Juan de la Maguana, Dominican Republic.

Campaign Goal
$550,000 covered the cost to build:

- Six custom-designed water systems that used a combination of solar energy, electrical power and gravity to pipe clean, abundant water to about 800 households.
- 24 sturdy new houses composed of prefabricated metal frames and concrete slabs, giving families safe shelter from storms.

How You Helped
Your generous gift helped Bishop Grullón’s diocesan charity, FUNDASEP, impact the lives of approximately 3,000 people in need. Your gift also directly empowered parish priests and lay Catholics as they reached out to the communities in need.

Thank you for joining us in blessing the poor of Azua, San Juan and Elias Piña!
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Matthew 5:6
SECTION I
THE PROBLEM & THE PLAN

• The Constant Quest for Water and Shelter
• A Life-Changing Solution
• Community Effort
In the remote village of Yacahueque, Catalina Montera’s daughter and husband were trying desperately to make it home before dark so they would have time to make dinner. They fetched water for the family seven days a week, and the backbreaking chore stole away a lot of time.

In the nearby province of Azua, in the village of Las Varias, Yeidi Paula was struggling with a similar task. She not only spent her days fetching water, she was constantly having to repair her makeshift shanty, which was constructed of splintering wood and rusty tin sheets.

Such is life for thousands of poor Dominican families living in rural villages where something as simple as running water and a solid roof over your head is considered a luxury. Thankfully, Cross Catholic Outreach’s ministry partner, FUNDASEP, reached out to these rural families and asked them what they needed most. Time and again, the answer was the same. They needed clean, abundant water. They also needed safe shelter to protect their families from the elements.

Bishop Grullón and his team at FUNDASEP — along with the priests at the Diocese of San Juan de la Maguana — saw this as an opportunity to do God’s will.

“God has more to give than what we have to ask,” said Bishop Grullón. “Everything we do for the poor, God is going to reward us in health, in welfare and above all, in spiritual peace and one day we can all come together in the kingdom of God.”

Before Cross Catholic Outreach partnered with FUNDASEP to provide clean water and housing, these villagers were in a desperate struggle for survival. Now, with their prayers answered, there is both a practical and spiritual transformation to be celebrated! You have helped make that possible!
A poor Dominican by birth, Bishop Grullón is a hero to the poor villagers he serves. He is trusted by local families and is respected for dedicating his life to helping the area’s less fortunate improve their difficult lives. For years, he has worked tirelessly to provide food, water and shelter for the poorest of the poor, and his efforts have blessed thirsty souls with the living water that is Jesus Christ.

One of the most impressive aspects of his ministry is the way he mobilizes the local communities, inspiring the people to come together as the body of Christ. In that sense, Bishop Grullón’s organization, FUNDASEP, represents the hands and feet of Christ’s holy mission to serve the poor. They go out and identify the leaders in each community. Guided by the Holy Spirit, they work with the parish priests to identify those who have the spiritual gifts to get the job done and who will motivate every man, woman and child.

Over the past 12 months, we have been blessed to witness this evangelization process play out in the provinces of Azua, San Juan and Elias Piña — and the positive results have been uncanny. For example, the process of bringing clean water to the remote village of Yacahueque was more than just digging trenches and laying water pipes. According to Father Christian, the parish priest who worked with the community, the labor process resulted in a complete spiritual transformation.

“A year ago, this community had little faith,” said Fr. Christian. “They didn’t pray. They didn’t practice their faith and they didn’t even have a church. Now, this village is a deeply spiritual community.”

When we visited Yacahueque, we saw what happens when the Holy Spirit spreads through a community to meet an urgent need. This community was so inspired, they not only finished their water project ahead of time, they also started building a new Catholic church directly on the site where Fr. Christian held Mass.

Fr. Christian opened the Mass with words of thanks to God and to all the congregants who had gathered to celebrate the blessing of clean, fresh water. It was truly a life-changing moment.
In each community, prospective homeowners regularly assisted the professional construction team by providing unskilled labor. This “sweat equity” was an essential part of the homebuilding process.

The process of transporting PVC pipe was an arduous task that required tremendous coordination between FUNDASEP organizers and community leaders.

Villagers would come from miles around to help a community inaugurate the first day of digging trenches and laying pipe.
SECTION II
THE ACHIEVEMENT

• Palo Blanco: Water Changes Everything
• The Paula Family: A Dream Come True
• Financial Summary
• Thank You!

The Santa children (Azua Province) are very grateful for their new home.
In the tiny community of Palo Blanco, people are praising God for the water system that was recently completed.

“I am so happy!” cries Catalina Montera Monero, who used to fetch water two to three times a day. “Now life is so easy. The water is right here! I am so thankful to FUNDASEP and to the Church. I prayed so much for this day. I wake up early every day to make my daily prayer to Our Lady.”

Thanks to your support, this mountain community on the border with Haiti, whose families previously relied on contaminated water sources just to survive, now has access to clean, plentiful water! After years of waiting, God has answered their prayers and accomplished what once seemed impossible!

Catalina isn’t the only Palo Blanco resident who greets us with thanks and praise. Frederico Encarnación tells us when he turned on the water tap for the first time, his family was so overjoyed, they had a big meal to celebrate!

Frederico says, “We worked hard to install the water system, and now it has changed our lives a lot. The whole family lost sleep when we had no running water. We waited a long time for this glorious moment. Now we thank God with all our heart!”

We honor Catalina, Frederico and all the other residents of Palo Blanco who have received God’s glorious bounty of clean water. You made it possible!
When we first met Yeidi Paula and her little boy, Francel, they were living in the province of Azua, in a pitiful rundown shack with a dirt floor and walls made of splintering wood and rusty tin sheets. Yeidi was born mute and has special needs of her own, but Yeidi’s father always prayed that his daughter and grandson would be able to have a proper home someday.

Now, thanks to your generosity, Yeidi and little Francel have a beautiful new house. Yeidi lets us know that she is so thankful to God and considers it a dream come true. Receiving a new home has deepened Yeidi’s faith in God. In fact, Yeidi’s mom, Vitalia, says her daughter rises each morning, opens the front door and thanks the Lord for her beautiful new house.

“We are so happy to have this house,” says Vitalia. It is such a blessing!” As she points to the old shack, she says, “You see that old roof? It leaked every time it rained. With this new house, we are protected from the rain.” Vitalia says, “I had a big smile when I found out Yeidi was getting a new house. It is a dream come true!”
Financial Summary

Your compassionate gift helped Cross Catholic Outreach raise the $550,000 needed to bring clean water and safe housing to some of the poorest families in the Dominican Republic. By joining with us in our Lenten campaign, *From Ashes to Life*, you have been the instrument God uses to serve the poor in a very tangible way.

**HOUSES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount Needed</th>
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<tr>
<td>Prefabricated metal frame</td>
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<td>Foundation</td>
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<td>Roof</td>
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<td>Electrical installation</td>
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<td>Finishings</td>
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<td>Professional labor</td>
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**COST PER HOUSE: $5,179**

**WATER**

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<td>Connectors to spigots</td>
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**COST PER HOUSEHOLD: $532**

**TOTAL**  
$550,000
In the Gospel of St. John, we learn of Jesus’ famous encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well. He tells her: “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.” (John 4:13-14)

That day, the Samaritan woman’s life was changed. In addition to her physical thirst being quenched by the water from the community well, her soul was blessed spiritually by the living water that is far more precious.

When you partnered with Cross Catholic Outreach in the Lenten outreach, something similar occurred. You did more than provide safe water and build sturdy homes for the materially poor. You changed everything about their daily lives, transforming them and their communities — From Ashes to Life.

On behalf of the many grateful villagers who are benefiting from this life-changing project, please accept our heartfelt gratitude!

God Bless You!
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. These detailed accountability measures have earned us ongoing accreditation by the following organizations: