



Catholic Diocese of Columbus

Office of the Bishop
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Reverend Monsignor Ted Bertagni
Director of Clergy and Diocesan Relations
2700 N. Military Trail, Ste. 300
Boca Raton, FL 33431

November 21, 2022

Dear Monsignor Bertagni:

The charitable actions of Cross Catholic Outreach demonstrate God's immense love for the poor. Through the ministry of Cross Catholic Outreach lives are being changed.

In recent years, the Church has adopted the term "integral human development" to describe its approach to addressing poverty. This approach is clearly recognized in the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. The poor were always a concern of our Lord and His first disciples. Throughout its rich tradition, the Church's Social Doctrine has emphasized a "preferential option for the poor."

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that "giving alms to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity; it is also a work of justice pleasing to God" (n. 2447). By sending food, building clean water wells, and shipping vital medical supplies to the poor, you are meeting their physical needs. In supporting Catholic religious education, the spiritual needs of the poor are also fed and strengthened.

On a personal note, I am especially fond of your Box of Joy ministry to children. Prior to my becoming Bishop of Columbus, my previous parish, St. Ignatius of Loyola Church in Cincinnati, participated in this program. With nearly 1200 children in the parish elementary school, the Box of Joy ministry helped raise awareness among young people of the need to alleviate poverty worldwide and also helped inspire them to be grateful for what they have and to be generous toward others.

I saw first-hand how the "faith in action" of children inspired a greater spirit of solidarity and generosity among adult members of the parish. Father Francesco Iacona also visited the parish and preached at all our weekend Masses, helping our people realize the true needs of others. Cross Catholic Outreach also avoids wasteful spending so that contributions make a real impact!

I am pleased to endorse Cross Catholic Outreach for its demonstration of authentic charity and its strengthening of the bonds of solidarity and human fraternity. Please be assured of my prayers for Cross Catholic Outreach, for the priests, and the staff in the indispensable work of helping the poor.

Offering my gratitude and prayerful best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ *Earl K. Fernandes*
Most Reverend Earl K. Fernandes
Bishop of Columbus