



Faith Sharing Group Reflections

Rice Bowl's weekly Stories of Hope include stories of inspiration from around the world with a particular focus on a principle of Catholic Social Teaching. **FAITH SHARING:** Gather as a faith sharing group each week to:

(1) learn about Catholic Social Teaching, (2) read from scripture, (3) ENCOUNTER the Story of Hope, (4) review faith-sharing questions, (5) end time of sharing with closing prayer.

Week Four – Call to Family, Community and Participation

Catholic social teaching inspires and guides how we are to live and work in the world. In this principle, Call to Family, Community and Participation, we remember that human beings are social by nature—we need each other. We, like the early disciples, are called to come together and grow as a community—whether that community is in our classroom, workplace or family.

Scripture: Romans 12:3-8



ENCOUNTER MARIA FROM MEXICO

Maria de la Luz Lugo Martínez remembers what it was like growing up in Ejido Hidalgo, Mexico. “We said we were rich because we had a lot of corn, beans and animals.” But now, with few jobs and even less rain, young people—including Maria’s children—are leaving the community in search of a better life.

To help families like Maria’s, CRS launched a greenhouse project empowering women with meaningful work and community. Women visit their community greenhouses to grow cactuses to sell—but they also go for so much more. “At the greenhouses, we laugh, we talk, we spend time together. Sometimes we leave our homes angry or sad. But then we start working with the plants, and we forget. Talking, laughing—we forget our problems for a while,” says Maria.

As the cactuses grow, so do the economic opportunities. “We didn’t believe we were going to get that far. It’s a lot of joy, a lot of excitement to see so many plants flowering.”

The flourishing cactuses aren’t the only things that give Maria pride. Even though they live far away, she still remains close to her family. “I give thanks to God that he gave me all my children and grandchildren,” she says. “They give me strength and courage to work hard. My children call and say, ‘Don’t give up, Mom. Have faith in God.’”

Faith-Sharing Questions:

1. How do you connect today's Scripture passage with the Catholic Social Teaching principle of the Call to Family, Community and Participation? How do you connect it to Maria's story?
2. What is one area in your life where you really need other people, where others can and/or do help you to grow into the person God created you to be?
3. At this point in your life, how much of yourself are you called to give to your immediate or extended family, to your parish community, to your local, state, national or global communities? In other words, where is God leading you to put your efforts to build family and community?

Closing Prayer:

Loving God of our human family,
Be with us as we form and support
community in our lives.

May we always be open to your presence
in every member of our community—both
those nearby and those around the world.

Amen.