



ROMAN CATHOLIC  
**DIOCESE of**  
**SPRINGFIELD-CAPE GIRARDEAU**

*Office of the Bishop*

January 12, 2023

Dear Parents,

We are currently planning for our annual Lenten Youth Mission of Mercy, an opportunity for the youth of our diocese to support a common cause "from east to west." Over the years the Lenten Youth Mission of Mercy has supported Eden Village (Springfield), Birthright (Cape Girardeau), Whole Kids Outreach (Ellington), Children's Haven (Joplin), and Mother's House in Hayti, Missouri.

This Lent, our diocesan Lenten Youth Mission of Mercy will respond to the needy in another poor area of our diocese, Cedar County. Almost 20% of the people who live in Cedar County are below the poverty line, higher than of the state average. Over 11% of the population are veterans on fixed income, also higher than the state average. The Stockton Area Ministerial Alliance, SAMA, an hour north of Springfield, assist the poor with phone bills, propane, electricity and food. And, the reality is the face of poverty in Cedar County is female and young. The Stockton Area Ministerial Alliance is trying to make a difference.

Due to a lack of resources, families can only receive food once a month from the SAMA Food Pantry. To consider what happens once that food runs out is simply heartbreaking. I hope you agree that SAMA is a worthy cause for the youth of our diocese to support. In asking the youth and children of the Diocese of Springfield - Cape Girardeau to support this cause, I know that many parents will be involved as well.

I encourage you to spend some time discussing with your children how your family may practice the traditional works of Lent: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, while participating in our diocesan Lenten Mission of Mercy. A prayer for the poor can be offered daily. As you fast from favorite foods or activities, the money normally spent on those items can be donated to this project. In our almsgiving throughout our diocese, "One Church, East to West," we will make a difference for needy families and veterans.

Sincerely yours in Christ,  
Most Reverend Edward M. Rice  
Bishop of Springfield-Cape Girardeau