

Operation Bread Box

Works Here —

Parish leaders throughout the diocese are once again gearing up for the annual fund raising effort of the diocesan International Justice and Peace Commission, Operation Bread Box.

The drive is a "Lenten program of prayer, education and almsgiving to directly support a third world development project and local hunger needs," promotional material from the commission states.

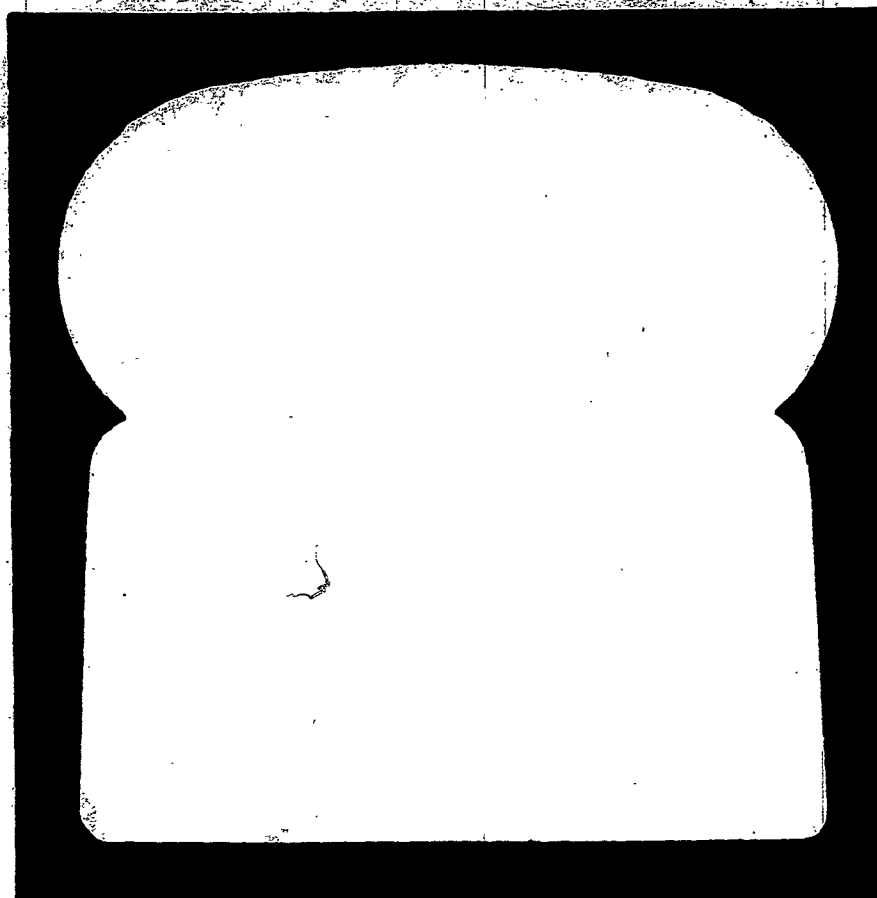
The objectives of Operation Bread Box are threefold:

- To make as many people as possible aware of what is being done to reduce hunger and injustice in the world through the direct support of one successful project.
- To create a spiritual bond between those directly involved in the project and those unable to directly participate, but who are joined in prayer for the success of the project.
- To financially support selected projects in third world countries through donations as well as to support local hunger projects.

The commission works the drive like this. At a family meal once a week during Lent, a prayer, native to the country of the project, is recited. The meal which follows is simple, and may well represent the daily fare of those whom the family wishes to help.

At the conclusion of the meal the family places in a special Operation Bread Box container a sum of money which represents the difference in cost between the simple meal and the family's typical meal.

The commission notes that "each year three projects are selected for the diocese, one each from Africa, Asia and Latin America."



In order for a project to qualify for Operation Bread Box aid, "it must be a self-help food related project; it must be in a third world country; it must be sponsored by a reliable organization and be administered by local leadership; it must already be ongoing."

Each year, 75 per cent of the monies gathered in the drive go to such-third world projects. This year the commission is disbursing funds to a farming cooperative in the Upper Volta region of Africa, to a crop-diversification project on one of the northern islands of the Philippines, and to a dairy cooperative in Macuspana, Mexico.

The remaining 25 per cent of the money is disbursed

to food programs in the diocese. All administrative expenses for Operation Bread Box are paid by International Justice and Peace Commission.

According to Lourdes Perez-Albuerno, program coordinator, parishes that wish to participate in the drive should contact the commission no later than Dec. 8. The commission will provide resource materials and will arrange for parish displays, a slide show of the various projects and speakers.

The International Justice and Peace Commission is housed in the Office of Human Development headquarters at 750 West Main St., Rochester, N.Y. 14611.

To Serve the World

The three third world projects which receive aid from Operation Bread Box are all directly concerned with improving the nutritional lives of those involved.

In Africa's Upper Volta region is the Urco Maya

farming cooperative. Urco Maya is made up of 800 farming families from eight villages on the edge of the Sahel.

The area is a sparsely forested savannah that has

been severely hit by drought and famine. The traditional growing season has now been reduced by the weather to less than two months out of the year.

Back in 1971 the farmers of the region banded together and built an irrigation system to tap the Volta River and a large underground lake. Soon they were growing enough feed for their families and had enough left over to sell.

The farmers then organized a farm cooperative to distribute and market vegetables in nearby cities.

Operation Bread Box funds this year will be used to continue development of the cooperative's water resources and will help build a central warehouse which will include a cold storage unit.

In the Philippine province of Benguet is the Sayangan Catholic Mission which is operating a crop-diversification program.

The mission is located in mountainous area where crops are planted on hillsides, ridges, plateaus and in small valleys.

The climate is ideal for fruit tree growing, and it is hoped that the establishment of orchards will lead to a reduction in unemployment, and provide a cash crop which can be exported to other areas of the Philippines as well as provide a more balanced diet for the people of the immediate region.

Four fruit tree nurseries are being established in various parts of the province. The nursery stock will eventually be distributed to farmers for planting in their own fields. The farmers first, however, will be trained by the mission staff in management and culture of fruit trees.

In addition, a non-profit cooperative has been set up to help farmers who lack the initial capital to buy trees. When the trees become productive, the farmer will repay the loan into a revolving fund for use by other farmers.

A description of the dairy project in Mexico appears on Page 11.

