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Diocese of Saint Cloud  
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January 12, 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the people of Venezuela, particularly those lacking basic human needs and the most vulnerable. I do so on behalf of Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and Caritas Venezuela.

For years, CRS has partnered with Caritas Venezuela to provide a lifeline of support to families across the country. Thanks to strong relationships with the local Church, Caritas Venezuela has a permanent presence in communities and can work in close collaboration with parish priests, lay leaders, health facilities, schools and local organizations. At this critical time, the lifesaving efforts of CRS and Caritas Venezuela are needed more than ever.

I reach out to you also prompted by our special diocesan connections with CRS and the people of Venezuela. I was honored this past November to be selected as chairman of CRS' board of directors, thus bringing the crisis in Venezuela directly to my attention. Then, as most of you know, our ties with our Venezuelan sisters and brothers have been long and deep.

For 60 years, our relationship with the Diocese of Maracay created countless bonds among our priests, religious, lay missionaries and thousands of our faithful, which continue to this day. Given the urgency of the current reality in Venezuela, I am inviting all our parishes, schools and Catholic institutions to select a time and an opportunity to contribute in direct support of CRS and Caritas Venezuela.

While recognizing the complex political relationships involved in this current crisis, let me assure you that our Church is a vital link connecting our Christian love and charity with those in crisis through no fault of their own.

Here are a few examples: CRS reports that 8 million need direct humanitarian assistance and more than 7.9 million have been forced to flee their homes. Additionally, drastic funding cuts in U.S. government assistance in 2025 resulted in 2.6 million people not receiving critical assistance as originally planned. Families who were already stretched to the limit now face even greater hardship. They need support urgently — and the Church is there.

Please send contributions and special collections to:

St. Cloud Mission Office  
CRS/Caritas Venezuela  
11 – 8<sup>th</sup> Ave S  
St Cloud MN 56301

Yours in Christ,

*+ Patrick M. Neary, C.S.C.*

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Bishop, Diocese of Saint Cloud