

To: To all parish priests, rectors of shrines and chaplains in the arch/diocese/
apostolic vicariate of _____

Subject: FAST2FEED 2023, ASH WEDNESDAY APPEAL FOR HAPAG-ASA INTEGRATED
NUTRITION PROGRAM

Date: 06 February 2023

Dear Reverend Fathers/Monsignor,

Greetings of Peace and Hope!

The 2022 State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World Report warned that world hunger rose further in 2022. The report captured data and pictures of the worsening state of children's malnutrition around the world. It emphasized that the world is facing the triple burden of malnutrition - undernutrition manifested in stunting and wasting; hidden hunger or deficiencies of vitamins and minerals; and overweight, a rising issue in children in the Philippines. These scenarios hinder the growth and development of an estimated 4 million undernourished Filipino.

But a long-term crisis is unfolding with this report with potentially sobering developmental implications for our country. A recently released article by Mr. Cielito Habito¹ indicates that malnutrition works in a cycle that repeats itself. For instance, babies born with low birth weight (typically from malnourished mothers who exhibit low weight gain during pregnancy) have higher infant mortality rates than regular-weight babies, impaired mental development, and inadequate growth. Without some nutritional intervention, they could grow to become stunted children and adolescents with reduced mental capacity. They then could grow into malnourished adults—who may repeat the cycle by giving birth to low-birth-weight babies—and elderly malnourished who themselves need care and are unable to help in the household.

In response to this urgent need, Pondo ng Pinoy supports the feeding of hungry and malnourished children throughout the country through the Hapag-Asa Integrated Nutrition Program. From your commitment and donations, we have supported hungry and malnourished children in poor and remote areas of the country since 2005.

While the program is relentlessly being promoted so that more Dioceses continuously join in this movement of feeding the children's future, there is also a need for the program to pursue fundraising activities to be able to provide the food subsidy to participating Dioceses to be used in feeding the hungry and malnourished children, one meal a day for 120 days.

¹ Mr. Cielito Habito is a Filipino economist, professor, and columnist. He served as the Director-General of the National Economic and Development Authority and Socio-Economic Planning Secretary during the Ramos administration.

For this purpose, may we humbly enjoin you again to urge the faithful to help feed hungry and malnourished children through the FAST2FEED Campaign in the coming Ash Wednesday on February 22, 2023? This year, we hope that the FAST2FEED will be able to raise the needed amount to provide nutritious meals to about 10,000 children to be fed by Pondo ng Pinoy member Dioceses.

To promote the FAST2FEED 2023 Fund Campaign before Ash Wednesday, Pondo ng Pinoy's National Management Office will prepare promotional materials and the FAST2FEED 2023 Fund Campaign envelopes to be distributed before Ash Wednesday. We humbly ask you to encourage the faithful to offer the FAST2FEED 2023 envelope with their donation during the mass on Ash Wednesday or to turn it over to the parish office any day.

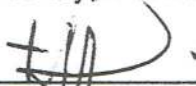
Collections for the FAST2FEED 2023 will be remitted to Pondo ng Pinoy using any of the following Pondo ng Pinoy - HAPAG-ASA bank accounts:

- Metrobank C/A No. 175-7175-50963-8
- Banco de Oro C/A No. 2638-00407-0
- BPI C/A No. 3061-0858-22
- China Bank C/A No. 103-57972-19
- Security Bank C/A No. 141-026133-002

For the amount collected, counted, and remitted to the Pondo ng Pinoy-Hapagasa bank accounts, please email a copy of the deposit slip to finance@pondongpinoy.com for acknowledgment and issuance of Official Receipt. We request that announcements about the FAST2FEED 2023 Fund Campaign be made and the HAPAG-ASA AVP shown in all masses as much as possible, as early as February. The pastoral letter to be read in all masses on Ash Wednesday is attached. For questions or clarifications, you may get in touch with the National Management Office at (02) 8527-8113, or with our diocesan Pondo ng Pinoy Coordinators.

In this environment, we have worked to respond to changing needs and priorities, let us remain faithful in demonstrating God's love and concern, especially for the least, the last, and the lost among our brethren, especially the children. The Church is especially called upon to remember our neighbors in need and engage the entire community in uncovering ways that can help them break free from the cycle of poverty. This coming Lenten Season let us prepare to celebrate God's redemption at Easter and further strengthen our faith to be able to love and serve more with God's grace.

Sincerely, in Christ,



Archbishop/Bishop

DRAFT

**PASTORAL LETTER
ASH WEDNESDAY
February 22, 2023**

My Dear People of God in the Arch/Diocese/Apostolic Vicariate of

The end of 2022 brought new hope in recovering from the impact of COVID-19. For many Filipinos, current employment opportunities start helping sustain the daily needs of the family. However, it wasn't how we expected 2022 to end, as food and energy prices quickly soared. While many of us are experiencing the pressure of rising costs, for the poor and most vulnerable people, it is life-threatening.

The Social Weather Stations 2022 survey revealed that inflation, which contributed to the rising cost of commodities, has pushed around 3.1 million Filipino families into extreme poverty. Consequently, malnutrition and hunger are on the rise in the Philippines.

At this time, all the initiatives to assist poor families, especially the children through our Hapag-Asa Integrated Feeding Program are all the more significant in complementing the efforts of the parents to provide for their family members while we continue a specific nourishment program for their malnourished children.

Pondo ng Pinoy Community Foundation Inc. is once again calling on your support in participating in the **FAST2FEED** campaign to be able to continuously provide one hot and nutritious meal a day for 120 feeding days to at least 27,000 children. **"Fast Today And Feed A Child"**— fast from a meal today, Ash Wednesday, and whatever savings you have from your small sacrifice may be donated to the Hapag-Asa Integrated Feeding Program that has continued to provide food for over two million children across the nation since 2005. It only takes about ₱15 a day or ₱1,800 to continuously feed a child for six months.

Today, as we observe Ash Wednesday to mark the beginning of Lent, let us renew our commitment to a life of prayer, fasting, and charity, following the teaching of today's gospel from Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18: giving to the needy, praying, and fasting. Indeed, your small acts of kindness—fasting from a meal today and giving to poor and malnourished children will make a big difference to many Filipino families. "Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

May God continue to bless your generosity and charity.

Bishop of Palo, Archbishop *John F. Du D.D.*