

IOWA HUNGER LUNCHEON

Speaker: Bishop Richard E. Pates

October 16, 2016 - 12:00 p.m.

Bishop Richard E. Pates

2009 Recipient, Robert D. Ray Iowa SHARES Humanitarian Award

I am genuinely grateful to Ambassador Quinn, the Ruan family, the World Food Prize for presenting me the 2017 Governor Ray Iowa SHARES Award. Thank you also, Governor Reynolds, for your participation in the ceremony, and I want to assure you our heartfelt prayers and best wishes are with you as you engage the role of leader of Iowa as its 43rd governor. So we're very happy to be able to be with you.

I also want to recognize the refugees who are here with us today from the Cathedral. Okay, thank you. Good friends, all, and also my colleagues from the Pastoral Center who have been so kind to join us in this celebration.

So I am honored and yet humbled by this award, as the state of Iowa has been in the forefront with leaders who have had an encompassing vision when they are called to share Iowa's bounty of food with the hungry. Among the prominent leaders, as we just outlined a little bit before, is President Herbert Hoover, who beginning in 1914 and again in 1945 and 1946, at the behest of President Harry Truman, utilized his organizational skills and compassion to confront widespread hunger in Europe in the desperate years after and during the world wars.

The Iowa vision emerged again as Governor Robert Ray, assisted by Ambassador Quinn, welcomed the thousands of Vietnamese refugees. With a coalition of civic and ecumenical leaders, they also provided food for desperate, hungry Cambodians. The theme that emerged at that time was "Iowa Shares."

Governor Ray's humanitarian instincts were assumed by Norman Borlaug. In his own right, he is credited with saving two billion people, which effort was recognized by his receiving the Nobel Prize as well as the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal. Norman Borlaug desired to encourage others to undertake initiatives to diminish the scandal of hunger in the world. His vision was implemented with the partnership of John Ruan in establishing the World Food Prize.

The World Food Prize honors those who have exercised leadership in food production and distribution, as it applies to the poor and to the hungry. By highlighting the work of NGOs, industrial and government initiatives, religious and humanitarian projects, the World Food Prize facilitates the way to alleviating hunger. Particularly inspiring to me is the World Food Prize Iowa Youth Institute and its program, so many of our youth gathered here today. Bright young people benefiting from scientific knowledge and a spirit of human solidarity have gone

worldwide to accompany poor farmers and communities to improve quality food availability. Many of these young people have been inspired to make this a lifelong career.

The Iowa vision as exemplified by the World Food Prize is needed today as much as ever. This past summer, after a 50-year hiatus, I visited Karonga, Malawi, in Central Africa. Things had not changed much since my initial stay as a deacon preparing for priesthood. The preponderance of housing is yet mud huts, thatched roofs, no running water or electricity. One concession to contemporary times is cell phones.

But efforts such as advocated by World Food Prize give people hope. One such project was sponsored by the local government, donors from Iowa and the Catholic Church. What was entailed was irrigation, pumping water from wells powered by solar energy to enable a farmer to have two crops each year instead of one. The farmers' subsisted income of \$148 is being doubled, and food security is no longer dependent on the vagaries of the climate. The quality of life is immensely improved for people distant from resources.

Pope Francis has memorialized the Iowa vision of feeding poor people with the constant refrain, *We are one human family, all brothers and sisters*. Iowa SHARES did not originate because we are superior, more intelligent, exceptional or otherwise entitled but because we have been blessed. I am honored to be guided by the Iowa SHARES vision and hopefully in some small way to pass along the blessings to our hungry sisters and brothers.

So thank you again. I'm very honored to be a part of this.