

Remarks
Bishop Richard Pates
2017 Robert D. Ray Iowa SHARES
Humanitarian Award

Ambassador Quinn, Staff of the World Food Prize, friends all . . .

I am honored and equally humbled by being named the recipient of the 2017 Robert D Ray Iowa SHARES Humanitarian Award. I thank Ambassador Quinn, the Ruan Family and World Food Prize for this generous consideration.

This award associates me with individuals whom I have great admiration for and who, I suggest, bear witness to the best traits of us Iowans.

When I first arrived in Iowa some ten years ago, I met Governor Ray and could easily appreciate how he had become a hero. His gregarious, warm and engaging personality supported the leadership he exercised in making Iowa a pre-eminent state in establishing programs and relationships that can be characterized as the best in developing friendship and meeting human need throughout the world.

The SHARES Program (Iowa Sends Help to Aid Refugees and End Starvation) is clear evidence of his humanitarian outreach and his ability to take action. After seeing starving people in Cambodian refugee camps and among the Vietnamese victims of war he joined Iowa ecumenical and civic leaders to bring relief to these desperate people. In addition, he welcomed refugees from this conflict who went on to serve the very best interests of our state and country. No doubt, Governor Ray set the standard both nationally and in Iowa for welcoming and enabling refugees and immigrants to find safe harbor. We remain challenged to live up to his example.

Norman Borlaug after whom the World Food Prize was instituted is another Iowan acclaimed by being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, Congressional Gold Medal of Honor and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. His compassionate instincts inspired him to utilize his remarkable scientific genius in providing for food needs in India, China, Mexico and elsewhere. He is credited in saving over a billion people from starvation. His outreach was motivated by genuine human feeling. He bridged differences and forged relationships that make possible one peaceful world.

The final Iowan to be cited is our very own Ambassador Kenneth Quinn, President of the World Food Prize Foundation. Ambassador Quinn's significant accomplishments in his own name are extensive, highlighting his leadership, talent, courage and compassion. What is even more impressive are his selfless efforts in promoting others and enabling those so promoted to provide enduring inspiration to our community. Examples A and B are Governor Ray and Norman Borlaug.

As I reflect upon my own experience, I am drawn by the generous examples of those who really love people everywhere and who want to bring the human family together.

So many organizations like the World Food Prize, Bread for the World, Catholic Relief Services, and multiple others active in international and national operations are making a difference and accomplishing a significant dent in hunger worldwide. They are to be applauded. Here in Des Moines the Polk County Supervisors, DMARC, Catholic Charities and other religious and civic organizations help us to realize that unfortunately hunger and its parent, poverty, are too widespread. We need to continue, with relentless dedication, to eliminate these realities in our midst.

My own ministry on behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops as Chairman of its International Justice and Peace Committee has especially brought me face to face with conflict, a primary cause of hunger and starvation.

Countries such as South Sudan, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burma, all which I have visited are embroiled in senseless internal conflict that is heart

wrenching. We need to reach out to them in faith and human relationship to help them overcome what is fruitless and highly destructive.

In my journeys with like-minded companions, I have been able to meet and enter into productive conversation, relationship and friendship with leaders from Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Palestine and Gaza. These friends of all races, religions and cultures are motivated by the same instincts, ideals, values and interests as are all genuine human beings if we but open ourselves to them and are willing to spend the time to come to know them. Isolation spawns fear and conflict. Human contact opens the doors to friendship and peace.

Five years ago, an individual entered the world stage with a message that has lit a flame of hope and challenged us to take the high road, that of Governor Ray, Norman Borlaug, and Ambassador Quinn.

Pope Francis invites us to see with the eyes of God and to realize and implement the reality that we are One Human Family, all brothers and sisters.