



Office of the President

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Cardinal Francis George, OMI
Archbishop of Chicago

Your Eminence/Excellency:

Our Church mourns the terrible suffering of our brothers and sisters in Haiti. The 7.0 magnitude earthquake that ravaged Haiti on January 12, 2010 has already claimed thousands of lives including the Archbishop of Port-au-Prince. It has destroyed countless homes, churches, seminaries, schools, and other buildings and has left millions without the most basic necessities of life. Our faith compels us to pray for and reach out to our brothers and sisters in their time of suffering.

We invite you to encourage your pastors to take up a second collection for the people and Church of Haiti *this weekend*, January 16 and 17, 2010. These funds will be used to support the efforts of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services, the official international humanitarian agency of the U.S. Catholic Church, as they respond to immediate emergency needs for such necessities as water, food, shelter and medical care, as well as to the long term need to rebuild after widespread destruction, and to the pastoral and reconstruction needs of the Church in Haiti.

Catholic Relief Services is already mounting a major emergency response to this severe disaster and has committed an initial \$5 million to fund relief efforts which are likely to go on for some time. Your help and the help of the Catholic people of the United States are urgently needed.

Next weekend January 23-24, many dioceses are scheduled to take up the Collection for the Church in Latin America. This Collection is vitally important for our ability to respond to the pastoral needs of the Church in Haiti and other parts of Latin America in the weeks and months ahead. We urge that you use both of these opportunities to express our solidarity and our loving support for our brothers and sisters in Haiti and ask you not to substitute one collection for the other.

Additional information on the U.S. Catholic community's response to this emergency and how U.S. Catholics can help can be found at CRS.org and USCCB.org

Cardinal Francis George, O.M.I.
Archbishop of Chicago
President

Most Reverend Timothy M. Dolan
Chairman
Catholic Relief Services