



Diocese of Joliet

GUIDELINES FOR

Parish Responses to Emergency Needs

- DIOCESE OF JOLIET -

Most Reverend Bishop Joseph L. Imesch, Bishop of Joliet

Sacred Scripture continually speaks to us of an active commitment to our neighbor and demands of us a shared responsibility for all of humanity. This duty is not limited to one's own family, nation or state, but extends progressively to all... so no one can consider himself extraneous or indifferent to the lot of another member of the human family.

Pope John Paul II, Centesimus Annus # 51.

a suffering world must find a place in the pastoral priorities of every Catholic parish. A parish's "catholicity" is illustrated in its willingness to go beyond its own boundaries to extend the Gospel, serve those in need, and work for global justice and peace. This is not a work for a few agencies or one parish committee, but for every believer and every local community of faith.

From *Called to Global Solidarity: International Challenges for U.S. Parishes*. United States Catholic Conference, 1997

Parishes in the Diocese of Joliet and across the United States stand as a source for personal motivation and a place for collective action in responding to human needs in the face of disasters caused by nature or human beings. Scripture and Church teaching call us to be both generous and wise in responding to the needs around us.

Following are guidelines for responding to needs that arise both here in our own country and around the world.

Coordinated National Efforts -----

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has assigned the role of coordinating the national responses to disasters to Catholic Relief Services and Catholic Charities USA. Catholic Relief Services coordinates the responses to disasters that occur outside of the United States. Catholic Charities USA coordinates those that occur within our country's borders. When disasters affect both, the two organizations collaborate in responding.

Typically, the President of the USCCB contacts each diocesan bishop to request a second collection to be taken in response to a particular disaster. The Diocese of Joliet, in general, will follow the lead of the USCCB in such request before asking for a second collection. However, parishes may take the initiative in responding to disasters, whether national or international.



continued on next page



Parish Efforts-----

Parishes are often asked to contribute directly by a variety of organizations responding to disasters in the U.S. and around the world. **Parishes are encouraged to respond but to exercise discernment when taking up second collections unless it is part of a diocesan-wide effort and authorized by the Bishop. When second collections are not called for, information to parishioners can be provided to assist them in their own choices for donations.**

Proper stewardship requires that such requests be examined closely, carefully and thoroughly before responding with funds, providing information or other support. The following considerations guide this examination:

Efficacy: Does the organization have a track record in effective disaster response?

Experience: Has the organization previously been active in the region where the disaster occurred? Does the organization have an accountable local distribution network?

Accountability: Does the organization meet basic stewardship, fiduciary, and reporting responsibilities?

Integrity: Does the organization act in ways consistent with the Church's mission and teaching?

Types of Donations-----

When an emergency occurs a decision needs to be made as to the kinds of donations to make. Often this is a question between providing money or donating material goods, i.e., clothes or food. In general, relief agencies make use of cash donations more effectively. This allows for exactly the right goods to be purchased and delivered efficiently and quickly. Gathering food or clothing here in Joliet to assist hurricane victims in Central America, for example, takes time to organize locally and requires a delivery system to the countries in need and a local distribution network to ensure that the items reach the persons in need. The cost of shipping such items also must be paid. Clothing, for example, often costs more to ship than its value. In many cases, there is no system in place to ensure that the sorts of food or clothing are appropriate for the people for whom they are intended.

Sometimes, after an initial response has been made, food, clothing, and medical supplies are appropriate for donation. Persons with needed skills such as doctors or construction workers can donate their expertise and travel to an area recovering from a disaster. Decisions in these cases need to be made in connection with a particular emergency and in coordination with relief agencies on the scene.

The Peace and Social Justice Ministry of the Diocese of Joliet can help coordinate such efforts as well as assist parishes in determining which is the best way to help in a particular situation.

Diocesan Coordination-----

The Peace and Social Justice Ministry will coordinate responses to international disasters in conjunction with Catholic Relief Services. The Joliet Diocese Catholic Charities in conjunction with Catholic Charities USA coordinates responses to nationwide disasters. Additionally, the Peace and Social Justice Ministry: Catholic Construction Corps may assist in reconstruction efforts after the first response phase is completed.

The Peace and Social Justice Ministry can be reached by phone at 815-834-4028 and by e-mail at peace@dioceseofjoliet.org. Catholic Charities can be reached at 815-723-3405 and by e-mail at hr@cc-doj.org.



CRS/Brian Shields

Official Disaster Response Agencies----

Catholic Relief Services and Catholic Charities have been designated by the bishops in the United States as the official respondents to disasters in the international and domestic scenes respectively. Below is information about each of these agencies and ways in which to contact them.

Catholic Relief Services

209 West Fayette Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
410-625-2220
www.catholicrelief.org

Catholic Relief Services was founded in 1943 by the Catholic Bishops of the United States to assist the poor and disadvantaged outside the country. The fundamental motivating force in all activities of CRS is the Gospel of Jesus Christ as it pertains to the alleviation of human suffering, the development of people and the fostering of charity and justice in the world. CRS provides direct aid to the poor, and involves people in their



Debbi Morello

own development, helping them to realize their potential. And CRS educates the people of the United States to fulfill their moral responsibilities toward our brothers and sisters around the world by helping the poor, working to remove the causes of poverty and promoting social justice.

Catholic Charities USA

731 King Street, Suite 200
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-549-1390
www.catholiccharitiesusa.org

Catholic Charities USA is a membership organization based in Alexandria, Virginia. By providing leadership, technical assistance, training, and other resources, the national office enables local agencies to better devote their own resources to serving their communities. Catholic Charities USA promotes innovative strategies that address human needs and social injustices. The national office also advocates for social policies that aim to reduce poverty, improve the lives of children and families and strengthen communities. The Disaster Response Office organizes the Catholic community's response to disaster in the United States.

Resource Organizations-----

The National Charities Information Bureau and the Council of Better Business Bureaus provide information about a large number of charitable organizations. Parishes can consult with these organizations to find background information on organizations wishing to solicit parish funds or seek parish assistance.

National Charities Information Bureau

19 Union Square West
New York, NY 10003
121-929-6300
www.give.org

NCIB's mission is to promote informed giving and to enable more contributors to make sound giving decisions. NCIB believes that donors are entitled to accurate information about the charitable organizations that seek their support. NCIB also believes that well-informed givers will ask questions and make judgments that will lead to an improved level of performance by charitable organizations.

Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc.

4200 Wilson Blvd., Suite 800
Arlington, VA 22203
703-276-0100
www.bbb.org

Charity Reports are maintained nationally by The Philanthropic Advisory Service (PAS) of the Council of Better Business Bureaus and locally by many BBB offices. These reports cover the full range of charitable and other soliciting or nonprofit organizations. Typically, these reports include information on the group's background, current programs, governing body, fund-raising practices, tax-exempt status, finances, and indication of whether or not the organizations comply with the 23 voluntary CBBB Standards for Charitable Solicitations.

Diocese of Joliet



Catholic Charities
203 N. Ottawa St.
Joliet, IL 60432
815-723-3405
www.cc-doj.org

Peace & Social Justice Ministry
402 S. Independence Blvd.
Romeoville, IL 60446
815-834-4028
www.paxjoliet.org