



*Hurricane Harvey Update*

*August 31, 2017*

**Impact on Archdiocese**

Harvey's flood waters have devastated the residents of our community and the death toll continues to rise. The storm has forced tens of thousands to evacuate their homes for shelters with few precious belongings and in some instances only the clothes they were wearing. Our employees and their families are among those impacted, escaping the rising waters by boat, leaving behind flooded homes and vehicles. Current estimates indicate 30,000-40,000 homes have been destroyed in the Houston area alone.

As of today, 41 Parish, School and other Archdiocesan locations across our 10 counties have reported storm damage from Hurricane Harvey. The total number of reports increases with each passing day and includes damaged churches, school and religious education buildings, rectories, parish life centers and offices. The destruction varies in degree, but includes a number of sites severely flooded by three or more feet of water.

**Outreach Efforts**

Since the storm arrived in our area and with the assistance of the Knights of Columbus, over 25 parishes across a 5 county region of our Archdiocese have served as shelters and/or donation centers collecting needed items to support the victims of this tragedy. We are posting a current list on the Archdiocesan website, but the information is evolving as needs arise. Therefore, those interested in volunteering or dropping off donated items are encouraged to contact the location in advance to ensure the site is still open and its hours of operation. It is important that we update this list as new information becomes available. Please keep us informed as some sites close and new sites are opened.

In addition to the assistance provided at our parish sites, Catholic Charities and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul provide long term assistance and case management services to victims of a natural disaster. As our community is moving from rescue to recovery, both agencies are open and stand ready to begin providing direct assistance to victims as they begin the long process to rebuild their lives.

### **Catholic School Students**

To assist those evacuated families with children attending Catholic School, our Interim Superintendent is working with the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops and Superintendents from other Texas dioceses to identify available seats in their Catholic schools where the students may be placed. Any families in need of these placement services should contact the Catholic Schools Office at 713-741-8704.

### **Texas Dioceses - Night of Adoration**

The Bishops of Diocese of Dallas and the Diocese of Fort Worth have announced plans for a Night of Adoration on Thursday, September 7, 2017, to pray for all of the victims of Hurricane Harvey. We are encouraging as many parishes as possible to participate and join in solidarity and prayer with our brothers and sisters around the State for those impacted by this tragedy. More information will follow regarding this special event.

### **National Special Collection for Harvey Victims**

Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, vice-president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has called on the bishops to consider taking up a special collection to support victims of Hurricane Harvey and to provide pastoral and rebuilding support to impacted dioceses.

In an August 28 letter, Archbishop Gomez requested that the collection be held during the weekend of **September 2-3 or September 9-10**.

Funds given to the collection will support the humanitarian and recovery efforts of Catholic Charities USA and will provide pastoral and rebuilding support to impacted dioceses through the USCCB. The hurricane has affected southeast Texas, including the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, and could also strike Louisiana. As a result, Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, president of USSCB, has asked Archbishop Gomez to coordinate this effort.