



Office of National Collections

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DATE: September 4, 2020

TO: Diocesan Communication Directors

FROM: Mary Mencarini Campbell ^{*mmc*}, Executive Director

RE: Bishops' Emergency Disaster Fund

Prompted by Hurricane Laura and the California wildfires, yesterday Archbishop José H. Gomez, President of the USCCB, sent a letter to all bishops asking them to consider taking up a voluntary special collection to support the humanitarian and Church needs arising from these and any future disasters. Collected funds will be used where they are most needed. Archbishop Gomez requested that this special emergency collection take place as soon as possible on a weekend that does not conflict with a diocese's scheduled collection for The Catholic University of America and that funds be remitted to the USCCB. Please see the press release, following.

Funds collected in this special appeal will become part of the Bishops Emergency Disaster Fund and will be used to support the efforts of Catholic Charities USA and/or Catholic Relief Services, the official relief agencies of the U.S. Catholic Church, as they and their local agencies respond to immediate emergency needs for such necessities as water, food, shelter, and medical care and aid in long-term rebuilding and recovery efforts, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops for pastoral and reconstruction needs of the Church. Funds will be used in response to Hurricane Laura and any other disasters that occur and will be distributed where they are most needed.

For further information about the Bishops Emergency Disaster Fund or any of the annual national collections, please do not hesitate to contact me at 202-541-3146 / mmencarinicampbell@usccb.org or Nicole Germain, promotions director, at ncpromo@usccb.org / 202-541-3400.

Contributions to voluntary emergency collections will be deposited to the Bishops Emergency Disaster Fund and used for the purpose(s) specified by the USCCB in its call for support. However, if such purpose(s) become unnecessary, impractical or impossible to fill, USCCB may use such contributions for other emergency disaster relief where it is most needed as determined by the Committee on National Collections using its emergency response protocol.



NEWS

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President of U.S. Bishops Conference Announces Emergency Collection for Natural Disasters in Wake of Hurricane and Wildfire

September 3, 2020

WASHINGTON – Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), has requested that bishops across the country consider taking up a voluntary special collection for the humanitarian, long-term recovery, and Church needs arising from the increasing number of natural disasters in the United States.

In his letter sent to bishops, Archbishop Gomez wrote, in part, “The traditional storm season has only just begun and already we have witnessed the devastating impact of Hurricane Laura and the California wildfires. Thousands of homes, businesses, and churches have been severely damaged or destroyed, and the impacts will be long-lasting.”

“We offer our prayers to families who have lost loved ones, homes, and businesses. Archbishop Etienne, the chairman of our Committee on National Collections, has been in touch with several bishops to learn about their situations and to offer our prayers and our desire to be of assistance in this time of need.”

“The funds collected in this special appeal will become part of the Bishops Emergency Disaster Fund and will be used to support the efforts of Catholic Charities USA and/or Catholic Relief Services, the official relief agencies of the U.S. Catholic Church, as they and their local agencies respond to immediate emergency needs for such necessities as water, food, shelter, and medical care, and aid in long-term rebuilding and recovery efforts; and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops for pastoral and reconstruction needs of the Church. Funds will be used in response to Hurricane Laura and any other disasters that occur and will be distributed where they are most needed. However, if such purpose(s) become unnecessary, impractical or impossible to fill, USCCB may use such contributions for other emergency disaster relief where it is most needed as determined by the Committee on National Collections using its emergency response protocol.”

Archbishop Gomez acknowledged the severity of the impact of COVID-19 on parish and diocesan activities and its challenging impact on fundraising, but also expressed hope in the generosity of the faithful and their care for those in need.

More information about the Office of National Collections and its support of emergency relief efforts can be found at <https://www.usccb.org/committees/national-collections>.

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