

Sunday September 13, 2020

PASTOR'S CORNER

Gratitude for our Parish Response to Hurricane Laura

A BIG THANK YOU!

Early on the morning of August 27, Hurricane Laura made landfall near Cameron, LA with catastrophic winds of 150 mph. The powerful winds and the tornadoes which the hurricane spawned wreaked devastation in Lake Charles and the surrounding area. Nearly one million people lost power in total, and tens of thousands of homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed. At present, 9,500 residents of Southwest Louisiana are living in hotels in the New Orleans area. As in Katrina, the recovery will be a marathon, not a sprint.

Our parish began a collection for Hurricane Laura victims on the weekend of August 29-30. To date we have collected over \$35,000. The sum includes: donations from parishioners (including many major donations), a \$2,400 collection from our school children, a \$445 collection from the sale of lemonade by St. Francis 4th graders, and major gifts from several parish organizations and ministries. Once the final donations are tallied, we will present a check to the Bishop of Lake Charles for ongoing recovery efforts.

On Labor Day, Fr. Thien and I and a group of 33 individuals traveled to Lake Charles to assist with hands-on hurricane cleanup at the homes of 10 parishioners of Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Lake Charles. A group of us departed from our own church parking lot in Metairie at 6 am. We worked in sweltering heat with chainsaws, wheelbarrows, shovels, rakes, brooms and gloves. We gave it our all for the better part of a day, bringing a little order to the mess, a little charity and a ray of hope to the people we helped.

I am very proud of our SFX parish family for supporting our hurricane response. We are helping sisters and brothers in need as Jesus asks. There is so much more that must happen for full restoration to take place but we have made a difference in the recovery. I ask God's blessings on the people of Southwest Louisiana and I ask God to bless our parish for the Christian witness we have given.

God bless you,

Fr. Joe