



## Office of National Collections

3211 FOURTH STREET NE • WASHINGTON DC 20017-1194

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DATE: August 19, 2021

TO: Diocesan Fiscal Officers

FROM: Mary Mencarini Campbell, Executive Director *mmc*

RE: Bishops' Emergency Disaster Fund

Prompted by the massive earthquake and tropical storm that hit Haiti, yesterday Archbishop José H. Gomez, President of the USCCB, sent a letter to all bishops (following) asking them to consider taking up a voluntary special collection to support the Church and humanitarian 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 any local scheduled collection for The Catholic University of America and that funds be remitted to the USCCB. Procedurally, the following may assist in the efforts of your (arch)diocese to respond.

1. If your (arch)diocese takes up a special collection, proceeds should be forwarded as soon as possible to:

**USCCB Office of National Collections  
Bishops Emergency Disaster Fund  
PO Box 96278  
Washington DC 20090-6278**

It would be most helpful if the funds came from the diocesan office and not from individual parishes. Please write "Bishops Emergency Disaster Fund" on the remittance check, add "Haiti" to the memo line, and use the enclosed transmittal form. *Due to the nature of disaster response, please encourage your parishes to remit their collection proceeds quickly and forward the diocesan contribution as soon as possible.* The five-month remittance guideline for standing national collections does not apply to emergency collections. You may also remit funds via ACH or EFT; contact [ncoachpayments@usccb.org](mailto:ncoachpayments@usccb.org) to get set up for ACH if you are not already registered; email [national\\_collections@usccb.org](mailto:national_collections@usccb.org) for information on electronic funds transfer. A transmittal form will be available online within the next week.

2. Funds collected in this special appeal will become part of the Bishops Emergency Disaster Fund and will be used to support the efforts of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops for pastoral and reconstruction needs of the Church and/or Catholic Relief Services/ Catholic Charities USA, 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. Funds will be used in response to the earthquake and tropical storm in Haiti and any other disasters that occur and will be distributed where they are most needed.

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.

3. 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](mailto:mmencarinicampbell@usccb.org) or Nicole Germain, promotions director, at 202-541-3365 / [ngermanin@usccb.org](mailto:ngermanin@usccb.org).



## ***Office of the President***

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Most Reverend José H. Gomez  
Archbishop of Los Angeles  
*President*

August 18, 2021

Your Eminence/Excellency:

This past weekend I offered my prayers of support to the people of Haiti in the aftermath of the earthquake that struck on Saturday. It caused immense damage and resulted in a substantial loss of life on an island already challenged by social unrest and still rebuilding after a major 2010 earthquake. Tropical Storm Grace followed just yesterday adding devastation to an already reeling population. As a result of both disasters many Church properties, along with homes and businesses, have been severely damaged or destroyed. The impact will be long-lasting.

Our partners at Catholic Relief Services are on the ground providing humanitarian relief and will be with the community over its extended recovery. The chairman of our Subcommittee on the Church in Latin America has approved \$10,000 grants to each of the three most impacted dioceses to begin to help them as they look to rebuild the many parishes, rectories, schools, and other Church properties reduced to rubble. But much more support will be needed.

To respond as a unified Church, I suggest we take up a voluntary special collection for the humanitarian, long-term recovery, and significant Church needs arising from these calamities. I ask that we make a special appeal in our dioceses to support the USCCB Bishops Emergency Disaster Fund and that we each take up the collection as soon as possible so that those most in need can receive assistance quickly. The annual collection for The Catholic University of America is scheduled in many dioceses the first or second weekend in September, and so I recommend that the special emergency collection be taken up on the nearest weekend that does not conflict with any local CUA appeal.

The funds collected in this special appeal will become part of the Bishops Emergency Disaster Fund and will be used to support the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops for pastoral and reconstruction needs of the Church as well as the efforts of Catholic Relief Services and/or Catholic Charities USA, the official relief agencies of the U.S. Catholic Church, as they and their local agencies respond to immediate emergency needs and aid in long-term rebuilding and recovery efforts. Funds will be used in response to the earthquake and Tropical Storm Grace calamities in Haiti 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.

I recognize that parish and diocesan activities continue to be impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and that the local capacity for fund-raising this year may be more challenging than with past emergency collections. However, I have experienced the generosity of our people and their deep care for those in need. I know that you will find the best way of making these needs known to your people and I have confidence in their prayerful consideration and response.

May Our Lady of Perpetual Help, patroness of Haiti, intercede for us that this special appeal will be successful and provide for the needs of the people and the Church in Haiti.

Fraternally yours in our Lord,

+ José H. Gomez

Most Reverend José H. Gomez  
Archbishop of Los Angeles  
President, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops