



Memo

Date: October 6, 2017
To: Pastors and Administrators
From: ✠The Most Reverend Wilton D. Gregory, S.L.D.
Re: Disaster Relief and a Special Initiative to Assist in Puerto Rico

As pastors and administrators of our parishes and missions in the Archdiocese of Atlanta, you are authorized and encouraged to act immediately when natural disasters occur. Please be creative in promoting ways for your parish faith community to assist during announcements at Masses, in your bulletin, on your website and social media, and on video monitors.

While special collections are still a wonderful way for our parish communities to express their solidarity with and support for those affected, more and more people choose to contribute electronically when these needs arise, and there is often confusion as to where donations should be directed.

When a natural disaster occurs *in the United States and its territories*, electronic donations may be made and parish collections may be directed to **Catholic Charities USA**, which assures us that 100% of donations go to the local organizations providing assistance. They and their member agencies respond to immediate emergency needs for such necessities as water, food, shelter and medical care, as well as to the long-term need to rebuild and recover after widespread destruction. They also assist the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops with pastoral and reconstruction needs of the Church. Their address information follows:

Catholic Charities USA

Online: www.catholiccharitiesusa.org

Mail: Catholic Charities USA
P.O. Box 17066
Baltimore MD 21297-1066

Phone: 800-919-9338

When disasters happen *in other countries*, collections and individual donations should be directed to **Catholic Relief Services (CRS)**:

Catholic Relief Services

Online: www.crs.org
Mail: Catholic Relief Services
P.O. Box 17090
Baltimore, MD 21297-0303
(Please indicate the specific relief effort in the memo line)
Phone: 877-Help-CRS

Recent hurricanes have brought devastation to both the United States and internationally, so both relief organizations will be asking for your assistance. Please encourage your parishioners to respond as generously as possible.

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In response to the unprecedented destruction caused by Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, several Puerto Rican clergy and laity within our Archdiocese are coordinating a special effort to help the local dioceses there. The group is working with Caritas Puerto Rico, a member agency of Catholic Charities, to collect funds and supplies to be shipped to Puerto Rico to assist in the relief effort.

Cash donations from parish collections or individuals may be sent to the Chancery (Attention: Puerto Rico Relief) to defray the costs of shipping and support the work of Caritas. Desperately needed supplies include bottled water, non-refrigerated milk, canned food, batteries of all types, bed linens, baby food, and disposable diapers. Please contact Randy Ortiz (404-955-0684 or rjortiz1966@gmail.com) if your parish intends to participate and to arrange delivery. Volunteers are being sought at both the parish level to collect items and at the warehouse to prepare for shipping. Anyone interested may contact Randy.

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I ask that you keep this information at your fingertips. The important thing is not the way our Catholic families participate, but rather that they do. The people of God in our Archdiocese are always incredibly generous in responding during these difficult moments. On behalf of all who respond in the name of the Catholic Church and all who rely on and benefit from your extraordinary kindness, thank you in advance for your promotion of and your participation in these important efforts.

Please continue to pray for all who are affected by these recent calamities.