



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

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

October 3, 2022

Your Eminence/Excellency:

As a result of Hurricane Ian's havoc – first across Cuba and the Dominican Republic and then the southeast US starting in Florida – lives have been lost and many Church properties, along with homes and businesses, have been severely damaged or destroyed. This followed the impact of Hurricane Fiona, which caused devastation across Puerto Rico and other parts of the Caribbean.

Our partners at Catholic Charities USA, along with their local agencies, are hard at work providing humanitarian relief and will be with communities over their extended recovery. Likewise, Catholic Relief Services and its local partners are responding with food, water, and sanitation assistance, and will eventually assist with the repair and rebuilding of homes. The chairman of our Committee on National Collections has been in contact with many of the bishops in impacted dioceses to receive information on their needs and offer support – and much 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 a collection as soon as possible so that those most in need can receive assistance quickly.

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 Charities USA and Catholic Relief Services, the official relief agencies of the U.S. Catholic Church, as they and their local agencies/partners respond to immediate emergency needs and aid in long-term rebuilding and recovery efforts. Funds will be used in response to the hurricanes and the impact of subsequent flooding and tornados 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.

We know the generosity of our people and their deep care for those in need. I trust that you will find the best way of making these needs known to the faithful in your diocese and I have confidence in their prayerful consideration and generous response.

Fraternally yours in our Lord,

+ José H. Gomez

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President, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops