

Hurricane Harvey's havoc was as promised

Dallas Catholic faithful aid evacuees, survivors

By David Sedeño
The Texas Catholic

Like an unwanted guest people knew was coming but couldn't keep away or control, Hurricane Harvey repeatedly battered the Texas Gulf Coast, leaving death and destruction in its wake as it dumped upwards of 4 feet of rain in communities ill-equipped to handle even much less.

In the aftermath, Hurricane Harvey left more than 60 people dead; thousands of homes damaged or destroyed, loss of water, gas and electricity in impacted areas; shuttered gas refineries that sparked gas panics in Central and North Texas and tens of thousands of lives uprooted, upended and uncertain.

Hurricane Harvey grew into a storm in the south Caribbean Sea in mid-August and slowly moved northward. As its strength grew, so did the warnings that its trajectory could hit the Texas Gulf Coast and that it could stay for a while because of the lack of another system to the west to push it north or east. And, unfortunately, the weather experts were right.

Harvey made landfall near Rockport on Aug. 25, ripping off roofs as it began to dump its rain across the area. For about five days, Hurricane Harvey let loose with what was called a thousand-year storm, dumping no less than 2 feet of water in some places to close to 60 inches in others. Especially hard hit was the Houston-Beaumont-Port Arthur area where nearly two weeks after the storm hit, many residents were still waiting to inspect their soaked homes and properties.

As in many natural disasters, tens of thousands of people answered the call to help, with donations through Catholic Charities, the Red Cross, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, among other organizations. Stories of courage, selflessness and heroism and tales of tragedy blended with scenes of hope.

So as people began the cleanup effort in their homes, businesses



CLAIRE COLLINS
Claire Collins, a literature teacher at Cristo Rey Dallas College Prep, carries boxes of pre-packaged meals into a makeshift donation center in the gymnasium at Cristo Rey Jesuit in Houston on Sept. 2.

and communities, and as chain saws and chippers hummed across the impacted region, help continued to arrive from across the country, even as evacuees found themselves in shelters in San Antonio, Austin and Dallas because their homes were uninhabitable.

In Dallas, Catholic church and school communities have been working to collect money, non-perishable foods and other items, including toiletries, disposable diapers, and other clothing, to not only send to the affected areas, but to help those who have sought refuge in shelters across North Texas.

Here is what some of those faithful communities have done, are planning and may need help with.

■ Students at St. Philip-St. Augustine Academy in Dallas gathered in prayer in the hallways of their southeast school and collected more than \$1,300 that will be donated to Catholic Charities Dallas for use in disaster relief.

■ Bishop Dunne Catholic School, whose Falcons football team was scheduled to play Port Arthur Memorial High School on Sept. 1 in Port

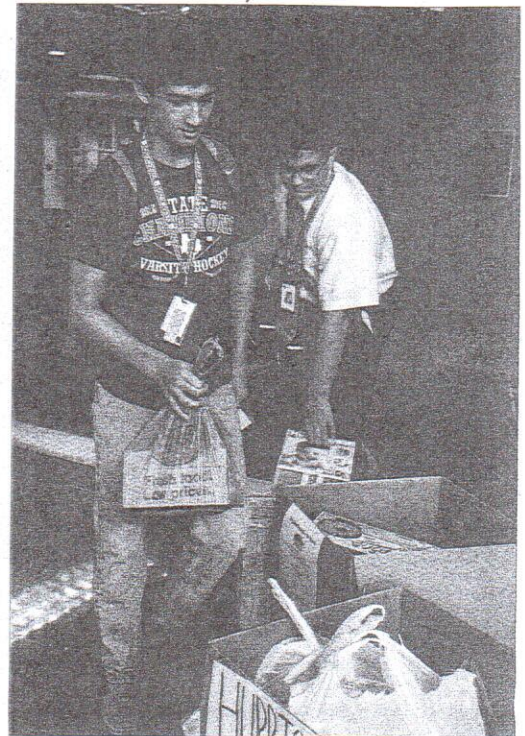
Arthur, which is inundated, instead held a pep rally on Aug. 31 and collected items were delivered to a central collection point at St. Rita Catholic School.

■ St. Rita Catholic School students collected items, which were delivered to the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center, which began housing all evacuees beginning on Sept. 5.

■ St. Mark the Evangelist students collected items, particularly items for toddlers and school-age children. The donations will be given to Trusted World.

■ St. Paul the Apostle students in Richardson collected diapers, baby wipes, baby bottles and formula, toiletries and other clothing items. Plus students were allowed to wear jeans and a school-approved shirt on Sept. 6 for a \$1 donation that will go to Catholic Charities.

■ St. Pius X encouraged its students to donate to the effort that will go to Catholic Charities. For every \$1 donated through Sept. 8, students will be allowed to write their names on colored handprints



RON HEFLIN/Special Contributor
Students Nathan Keith, left, and Andrew Mosier drop off donations for Hurricane Harvey victims at John Paul II High School in Plano on Sept. 1.

that will be placed on the walls of the school.

■ Ursuline Academy of Dallas students also collected and donated items.

■ Bishop Lynch High School collected several hundred packets of toiletry items for evacuees.

Along with the human toll, insurance industry experts say Hurricane Harvey could leave upwards of \$200 billion in damage.

And as people on the Texas Gulf

Coast worked to find a semblance for their lives now and for the future, another hurricane, this one called Irma, was making its way northward in the Caribbean, barreling toward south Florida and threatening to disrupt hundreds of thousands of lives.

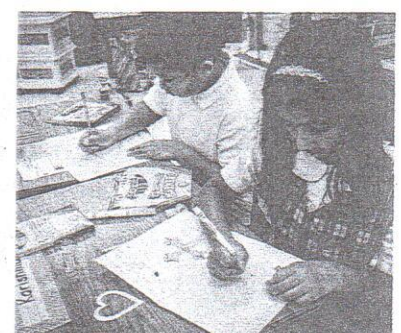
For more Hurricane Harvey recovery stories and videos and how you can help, along with continued coverage of Hurricane Irma and the Catholic Church's response, please go to TexasCatholic.com.



URSULINE ACADEMY PHOTO
Ursuline Academy students donate items to help people affected by the devastation of Hurricane Harvey, which struck the Texas Gulf Coast on Aug. 25.



ST. PHILIP & ST. AUGUSTINE CATHOLIC ACADEMY PHOTO
Students and teachers at St. Philip & St. Augustine Catholic Academy join hands and recite prayers for the people affected by Hurricane Harvey on Aug. 30. The students also raised more than \$1,300 to be donated to Catholic Charities Dallas' relief efforts.



RON HEFLIN/Special Contributor
Second-graders Juan Pablo Mean, left, and Karishma John work on their cards for the victims of Hurricane Harvey at Mary Immaculate Catholic School in Farmers Branch on Sept. 1.