

Collections following natural disasters (Oct. 1, 2017)

Bishop Timothy L. Doherty

With three months left in hurricane season, we have already experienced three storms which extensively damaged two U.S. states and many island territories that belong to the United States and other countries. There are 3.5 million U.S. citizens living in Puerto Rico, which is suffering mightily. Two recent earthquakes in Mexico have killed hundreds and displaced homes, churches and businesses.

The U.S. bishops and local pastors have received many calls about helping, and most parishes have taken up collections. On our part, aid to U.S. states and territories is channeled through Catholic Charities USA, and aid to people and churches in Mexico and Caribbean Islands will flow through Catholic Relief Services. Each storied agency is sponsored by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Money and materials can be directed to the agency of your choice, either directly or through your parish or the diocese. All funds received by the diocese will be forwarded.

The need is great and our offerings seem small by comparison. Care of people and churches will take years. But rather than think that our offering makes no difference, I refer you to the miracle of the loaves and fishes in Matthew, Chapter 14. Like those original disciples, we might ask Jesus, "What is so little among so many?" And like those disciples, we may learn to give something and then let God worry about the outcome.

No one agency or government can handle emergencies like we are seeing. But each agency that has shareable resources and expertise will increase their power through cooperative action. In helping the helpers to sustain their activity, much good can happen.

To learn about Catholic Charities USA, go to <https://catholiccharitiesusa.org/>

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