



CATHOLIC CHARITIES, INC.

200 North Congress Street, Suite 100
Jackson, Mississippi 39201
601-355-8634 Fax 601-960-8493

August 29, 2008

Dear Pastors and Ecclesial Ministers,

As hurricane season is upon us, I wanted to take this opportunity to explain the role of Catholic Charities Disaster Response team during times of disasters. The goal of our Disaster Response efforts is to support you and your community in times of disaster. We can do this by providing funds, technical assistance, and links to resources.

You should already have a Parish Disaster Plan. If not, we will be happy to work with you in tailoring a plan for your parish. Also, please remember that this plan is a living document and will only work as well as it is actively implemented and utilized.

Please note, Catholic Charities, Inc. (CCI), through our national network, Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA), can assist parishes that provide emergency shelter, food or water to disaster victims. Please keep your receipts and document the number of persons you help, and then send the information to me at CCI. I will facilitate the reimbursement process with CCUSA.

I have enclosed a brief list of important phone numbers and tips and a checklist of best practices. MDOT's Hurricane Evacuation guide is posted at <http://www.msema.org>. Updates will be posted on the Diocesan (<http://www.jacksondiocese.org>) and Catholic Charities (<http://www.catholiccharitiesjackson.org>) websites. Please check these sites frequently.

With best regards,

Michael Ann Galliano Oropeza
Parish Based Ministries Coordinator

Enclosures

PROVIDING HELP. CREATING HOPE.



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF JACKSON

Disaster Response Contact Information

Catholic Charities, Inc. of Jackson

- Catholic Charities, Inc. DISASTER EMERGENCY -
- Michael Ann Oropeza, Director of Parish Social Ministry - (601) 355-8634 (Cell) 601-946-1904
- Benjamin Russell, Associate Director of Parish Social Ministry - (601) 355-8634 and North East (662) 682-9992
- Pam McFarland – Administrative Assistant (601) 355-8634

FEMA #: 1-800-621-FEMA (3632)

United Way #: 211

DISASTER TIPS

- Reach out to other ministries in your community.
- Keep in contact with Catholic Charities.
- Identify the vulnerable populations in your community (the elderly, the undocumented, and the poor).
- Identify volunteers. Look for leaders, case managers, drivers, delivery persons, those with construction experience, cooks and bakers, etc.
- Understand the process. Parishioners dealing with FEMA may be extremely frustrated because the process is complex, being able to listen and explain, or bring in someone who can advocate on the victims behalf will provide great help.
- Be aware of mental health issues. Immediately after a disaster families and communities come together to respond. However as the danger passes and the daily inconveniences of shared space, lost items, and endless mess persists tempers will grow short. People will grow depressed. Those already suffering mental illness may have problems with the change of setting or availability of their medications. Studies in New Orleans found that the number of cases of depression tripled in their community after the hurricane. This is a normal part of the recovery and clients who may be adverse to see a counselor may need one now.
- Take Care of Yourself. In many areas the priests have been affected by the disaster along with their community yet they are still very much needed as the caregivers. Please take time to ensure your own mental and spiritual well being.

Tropical Weather/Hurricane

DEFINITIONS

Hurricane Watch hurricane conditions pose a potential threat to an area within 36 hours.

Hurricane Warning hurricane conditions are expected within 24 hours.

PLAN OF ACTION

Activation Level I (non-threat period)

- Conduct meeting/drill during to review hurricane plan
- Update emergency services phone numbers and contact lists/phone tree
- Review vendor/supplier and other agreements for sheltering or other services
- Review emergency supplies list, restock any depleted items
- Maintain building through routine maintenance and repairs
- Document interior/exterior building conditions
- Monitor tropical weather conditions

Activation Level III (local impact expected 24-36 hrs)

- Set up and move operations to central location for disaster operations
- Obtain cash/travelers checks for up to 7 days of operations
- Contact civil parish emergency management for information on evacuation orders
- Determine need for parish closure/evacuation
- Implement phone tree to announce parish closure/evacuation
- Notify diocese of decision to close and pastor's evacuation destination
- Activate parish closure outgoing message on voicemail
- Review emergency and clean up supplies
- Board windows and doors
- Bring in all loose outdoor objects and secure antennas and large items
- Establish damage assessment teams
- Disconnect electrical appliances, protect computers from water damage
- Monitor tropical weather conditions

Activation Level II (local impact expected 36-48 hrs)

- Implement phone tree to alert staff of situation
- Alert diocese if intend to close office/evacuate
- Secure blessed sacrament and sacramental records
- Review agreements for shelter, transportation or other services, if offered
- Conduct meeting of staff and volunteers to brief on hurricane procedures
- Designate contact to communicate with diocese to inform of closures/suspension of services
- Update emergency supplies
- Charge all communications tools (cell phones, radios)
- Determine method to secure Blessed Sacrament and sacramental records.
- Prepare messages to inform parishioners of closures/meeting cancellations
- Monitor tropical weather conditions

Activation Level IV (local impact expected 12-24 hrs)

- Clean and store all cooking and eating utensils
- Clean out refrigerators and freezers
- Fill ice chests with ice
- Fill gallon buckets with water for flushing toilets
- Box all dry and canned goods
- Contact civil parish emergency management for information on evacuation orders
- Turn off circuit breakers
- If power goes out, turn off main circuit breaker
- Monitor tropical weather conditions

Activation Level V (post impact)

- Contact civil parish emergency management to determine safe return
- Conduct initial damage assessments
- Report initial damage assessments to diocese
- Conduct initial needs assessment
- Report initial needs to catholic charities
- Determine when it is safe to open offices and resume services
- Alert parish staff when offices will open
- Organize volunteers to assist with community response and recovery