

Diocese responds to hurricane victims

Catholic school students among the first to take action!

Help for the victims of the recent hurricanes have come in many forms throughout the Diocese of New Ulm. Soon after Hurricane Katrina, the Catholic School students were among the first to take action!



Students at St. Raphael's School, Springfield collect items for victims of Hurricane Katrina.

SLEEPY EYE ST. MARY'S, junior class, under the leadership of teacher Mary Beth Botz put into action *Operation H2O (Help To Orleans)*. After hearing about the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina, Botz challenged her junior class to be of assistance and *Operation H2O* was developed. The students formed committees to alert the local media to their project, contacted local banks about being drop-sites for financial donations, spoke at Masses to inform parishioners about the project, and delivered collection bags and information about the project to homes and businesses in the Sleepy Eye community. Donations were collected by the students or delivered to the St. Mary's Rectory and the three schools. After sorting and boxing the items, they were loaded into a semi. Working in conjunction with Sleepy Eye Public School and St. John's Lutheran School, the students collected 19,000 pounds of much-needed supplies...nearly an entire semi of donations! Personal hygiene items, non-perishable food and bottled water, clothing, diapers, towels and more were among the supplies collected to assist hurricane victims. The generosity of the students, their families, and the entire Sleepy Eye community was outstanding.

ST. RAPHAEL SCHOOL, **SPRINGFIELD** students also took part in the *'Operation H2O'* by inviting neighboring schools to help fill a semi-truck with supplies such as bottled water, diapers, toothpaste and tooth brushes, toys, clothing, packaged foods, canned goods, personal care and grooming items, among other things, for victims of Hurricane Katrina.

ST. EDWARD'S SCHOOL, MINNEOTA students donated a \$1.00 or more per student for hurricane victims. For their great effort they were rewarded with root beer floats.

ST. ANASTASIA SCHOOL, HUTCHINSON students had a special collection for the "Child to Child" Campaign at their regular Friday Mass. Approximately \$290 was collected for the fund!

ST. PHILIP SCHOOL, LITCHFIELD students participated in the NCEA "Child to Child" Campaign. The goal was to collect \$1.00 from each child at the Mass on September 9. As the students entered the church they placed their donations in a basket and this was presented during the offertory procession. Although there are only 90 students at St. Philip's, they generously went way beyond the \$90 that was hoped for. Instead the collection amounted to \$149.52 worth of pennies, nickels and dimes, as well as crumpled dollar bills in the collection basket. These students had obviously contributed from their own banks.

PARISHES THROUGHOUT DIOCESE RESPOND

During September, special collections were taken up in parishes throughout the Diocese of New Ulm. People responded very generously. Collection proceeds were given to Catholic Charities USA, and will be used to provide emergency and long-term recovery assistance to individuals and families affected by Hurricane Katrina.

HURRICANE RELIEF - WHAT CAN WE DO?

by Christopher Loetscher
Diocesan Director of Social Concerns

PRAY. Pray for generosity and patience, healing and renewal.

CONTRIBUTE to the efforts of organizations providing emergency and long-term recovery assistance, e.g., CATHOLIC CHARITIES USA, Hurricane Katrina, PO Box 25168, Alexandria, VA 22313-9788, (www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/news/katrina.cfm); Catholic Charities agencies in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, and their partners in other dioceses; AMERICAN RED CROSS (www.redcross.org); AMERICA'S SECOND HARVEST (www.secondharvest.org), ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW ORLEANS (Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund, 1800 South Acadian Thruway, Baton Rouge, LA 70808), Local Society of St. Vincent de Paul (P.O. Box 127, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-0127).

Be wary of scam artists and profiteers. Check out the organizations that are soliciting donations to assist emergency and long-term recovery efforts in the Gulf states. To review charities, contact: Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance www.give.org. Charity Navigator/www.charitynavigator.org, Charities Review Council of Minnesota/www.crcmn.org, Guidestar: National Database of Nonprofit Organization/www.guidestar.org.

HELP TO PROVIDE SHELTER in cooperation with a licensed social service agency. Catholic Charities, Lutheran Social Services, County Family/Human Services are the kinds of agencies that are able to provide necessary oversight and follow-up support. Agencies are seeking individuals, churches, and businesses that are able to provide housing (a vacant home, apartment, mobile home) to an individual or family for 90-180 days or more. Could we help to pay the rent and/or utilities, provide household necessities, extend friendship and support? Contact Catholic Charities of St. Cloud, www.cccstcloud.org, (320) 229-6020, to offer temporary housing to an individual or family.

VOLUNTEER through the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (www.nvoad.org).

Remember that this human and environmental catastrophe will require on-going attention and response. Be prepared to help for the long haul.

The poverty of desperation and it's "relief!"



by Fr. Philip Schotzko

Recently I picked up a 50's vintage, black and white, crinkled picture of my brother and me. Our everyday, winter coats, caps and mittens were frayed, full of holes and the wrong size. They seemed just fine back then. There we stood, proudly and happily, next to one of a multitude of farms pets.

We were economically poor but we didn't know it. We had enough food and shelter and we had our big family wrapped around us. This is not the poverty of desperation I am talking about.

The real images of the poverty of desperation often flash on the TV news accompanied by stories of the effects of war, natural disasters or genocide. Usually they come from distant lands and cultures very different from our own. This helps protect our hearts from being broken. Unfortunately, we forget that our hearts are made to be broken open in compassionate love.

Lately, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and Rita, tragic and desperate images "flooded" the air waves and pages of the media. Now the scenes come from within our borders and reveal a flawed nation with "back waters" of raw

poverty, racism and political intrigue. Now we cannot ignore the pain...the desperation. The cries of the poor must be heard.

I keep asking myself, if I were there, with family scattered, home and neighborhood destroyed, and hardly a penny to my name, what would relief look like? I can only imagine. Perhaps these four areas of needs-answered would spell relief and give me courage to carry on:

1. Temporary food, clothing and shelter offered without asking if I was a U.S. citizen.
2. Someone to look me in the eye with compassion and willing to walk with me through the fears until a network of new relationships develops to provide personal support.
3. Folks to sing and dance with me (especially if I was from New Orleans).
4. Encouragement in the area of faith that would bring healing of memories as well as trust and hope for the future. (Somebody willing to pray with me and for me)

May what we offer as a caring, faith-filled people truly bring relief and help rebuild the lives of those who have known desperation.

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October 23, 2005 WORLD MISSION SUNDAY

a Eucharistic celebration for all the missions of the world. The offerings collected on World Mission Sunday are destined for a common fund of solidarity distributed in the Pope's name, by the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, among the Missions and missionaries of the world.



PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY IN YOUR PARISH.
www.worldmissions-catholicchurch.org