

CATHOLIC HERALD

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HERALD OF HOPE



Hurricane response celebrates light over darkness

Archbishop
Timothy M. Dolan

"Archbishop, we got word that you were encouraging every parish to take up a second collection for the hurricane victims. Just to let you know we disobeyed you. We gave our first collection to the cause."

That's but one instance of the tremendous response from all of you to the hurricane disaster. Every parish, school, program, and organization seems to be generously involved. This is Jesus ... this is his Gospel ... this is his church ... this is the Eucharist.

We know it will take a long time and that massive help is still needed. That is a major preoccupation of the

meeting of the administrative board of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops I am now attending.

Thanks in a special way to Diane Knight and her staff at Catholic Charities. You probably know that Catholic Charities USA has been designated as one of the national agencies assisting in the long-range rebuilding, and Diane has been our arch-diocesan point person, working closely with the Red Cross, Salvation Army, and the arriving survivors at the State Fair grounds. She reports receiving dozens of daily offers of help, ideas for aid, and inspiring reports of local efforts from so many of you.

People are not waiting to be asked to help. Saint Francis de Sales Seminary offered to take seminarians from New Orleans, where the seminary has been destroyed; Marquette university has accepted displaced students from Xavier and Loyola Universities in New Orleans; local parish schools are eager and ready to welcome children who arrive from the leveled areas; priests are putting together "care packages" of altar breads, sacramental wine, liturgical books, and vestments for priests down South who lack the elementals for celebrating the Eucharist ... just a few examples.

I called one of our pastors near the State Fair grounds, where evacuees are being housed, inquiring if I should come on Sunday to celebrate Mass. He wisely replied, "Thanks, Archbishop, but we figure it would be better to bring them here to the parish and help them feel at home. We've got rides already lined-up, and after Mass they'll bring them to their own homes for Sunday dinner." Me and my big ideas. This priest and his people were way ahead of me.

Light over darkness ... healing over hurt ... resilient rebuilding over destruction ... life over death ... that's what seems to be going on here. In a way, that's what we celebrated yesterday on the Feast of the *Triumph of the Holy Cross*.

So we in the church are challenged to help people find focus, meaning, and hope in all this hurt, sorrow, and destruction. A priest shared how he returned to his parish to find extensive destruction and flooding. He took to the rescue boat to survey what the survivors needed, asking if they were looking for food, water, medicine, blankets, or shelter. "We need them all, Father. But right now, what we'd really appreciate is having you pray for us and with us."

Something tells me that the cross was part of his prayer; something tells me he may have mentioned Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

"We adore Thee O Christ and we praise Thee. Because by Thy Holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world."

Thank you! Keep up the good work.