

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Baptism,

What difficult days as Hurricane Harvey has hit the Gulf Coast in a catastrophic and devastating way this past weekend and has lasted all week. Thank God it was downgraded to a tropical storm; but it continued to bring us severe flooding and high winds that have already taken human life, caused countless injuries, and severely damaged so many homes and property throughout Texas and certainly our Southeast Texas region. The effects of this storm continue to put people in very dangerous harm's way, with horrific scenes playing out all around us, such as those of people trapped on their rooftops as water continues to rise around them. Many of our people and the parishes of our diocese have been dramatically and tragically affected; many others will continue to be devastated as the storm continues. It is a terrible storm! But we must hold on to hope in the midst of heartbreak!

Thank God the Cathedral Basilica campus has a very high elevation -- Every building is dry! Praise God! This an epic storm for Texas, and it is now heading to Louisiana. So much destruction, flooding, thousands of displaced people, and tremendous damage to people's lives and homes. Clean up and our emergency response will continue, last for a very long time, and many, many resources will be needed to get back to normal!

Our prayers are first and foremost and must be constant for all those affected. In union with Catholic Charities and other relief agencies, we have much assistance to offer and work to do individually and as a community in extensive disaster relief!



Bishop Guillory will soon be authorizing and be giving us directions regarding a special Emergency Disaster collection to be taken up for the disaster relief efforts of Catholic Charities for peoples and areas hardest hit by storm damage and flooding. At the time of this writing, it's hard to gauge and assess the extent of the damage; but our Bishop wants to have a quick response, as fast as possible, to victims in areas that are continuing to be hardest hit by this prolonged devastating storm.

Though the brunt of the epic storm's winds is beginning to slowly pass our area, and Harvey has been downgraded to a tropical storm, winds, heavy rains, and catastrophic flooding continue. So many people of our area, state, and the State of Louisiana have suffered substantial property damage and losses. I cannot stress how vital our prayers and disaster relief efforts are and will continue to be for everyone affected by the horrific Storm Harvey. Our prayers are also very much needed for all our brave first responders, emergency personnel and volunteers who have and continue to offer their lives to save others as relief efforts continue in these very dangerous conditions. God bless all the brave women and men first responders!

Faith Formation and Sacramental Preparations begin on Wednesday, September 13, at 5:45 p.m. in our school. Kindly call Yazmin at (409) 833-6433 ext. 104 for more information and to volunteer to help with Elementary and High School Faith Formation and Sacramental Preparations.

Non-Catholics who wish to learn more about our Catholic Faith are urged to call Kay Arrington at (409) 553-2924 about our RCIA program. Classes will meet on Tuesdays in our Cathedral Basilica Center at 7:00 p.m. 'til 8:30 p.m.

During this Labor Day weekend, we thank God for all those who labor to make our world a better place through industry, business, and the work of their brains plus their brawn. May we pray for the safety of those important people who labor and for all who travel this weekend. Let us labor for the good of our human community and for the Lord. Kindly also remember the unemployed; may God grant them jobs.

Love and prayers,

*Msgr. Jerry*