

# NEWS

**Primary contact:**

**Deacon John McDermott (Relief Coordinator)  
585-328-3228 (x 1303) or 264-1608**

**Additional contacts:**

**Doug Mandelaro (Media Relations), x 1247  
Dave Kelly (Media Relations) x 1326**



ROMAN CATHOLIC  
DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

## **Diocese of Rochester in formal partnership of hope, healing with Archdiocese of New Orleans**

ROCHESTER, N.Y. -- The Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester today announced a partnership agreement with the Archdiocese of New Orleans to assist in long-term recovery efforts in the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. While individual parishes across the country have formed alliances to offer long-term help beyond financial assistance, this agreement marks the first such relationship by a diocese as a whole with the Archdiocese.

Details of the support offered by this agreement will be worked out in the coming weeks, but likely will include:

- Parish-to-parish partnerships matched up with the assistance of the Catholic Charities USA national database.
- Diocese-to-diocese support in the form of volunteers and material support
- Other partnerships between schools (e.g. Newman Community groups on college campuses), religious groups and involvement by area Roman Catholic deacons.

“This partnership is a long-term commitment and a pledge to help the rebuilding process and to assist by whatever means we can to assuage the suffering,” Bishop of Rochester Matthew H. Clark said.

This partnership comes in addition to the more than \$500,000 in cash donations that Diocese of Rochester parishes have already raised for hurricane relief on behalf of Catholic Charities USA. As well, local Catholic Charities agencies throughout the Diocese, as well as individual parishes, are actively supporting the various needs of a number of evacuees who have come to this area.

***“We wish to express our Christian solidarity with those affected by the Hurricane and offer not only our daily prayers and donations, but hands-on involvement in the rebuilding process.”***

***~ Bishop of Rochester  
Matthew Clark***

“In announcing this agreement,” Bishop Clark added, “we wish to express our Christian solidarity with those affected by the Hurricane and offer not only our daily prayers and donations, but also our hands-on involvement in the rebuilding process. The partnership is intended to focus our response as a Diocese, aligns our efforts with those already underway by Catholic Charities and provides a concrete means for our parishes to participate with direct assistance.

This agreement was prompted by not only the overwhelming devastation wrought by the hurricanes but the outpouring of desire by individuals and parishes within our diocese to respond in ways beyond giving money. This agreement goes to the heart of our understanding of Christian fellowship and community. St. Paul tells us that we are part of one body of Christ: “If one member suffers, we all suffer together with it.” (1 Corinthians 12:26)

The Archdiocese of New Orleans, which has been deeply affected by this tragedy, has:

- 480,000 Catholics in a general population of 1.4 million people, and includes the City of New Orleans and 7 other neighboring civil parishes. Together, they have suffered:
  - Approx. 800 deaths
  - The loss of over 300,000 homes
  - The loss of approx. 250,000 jobs
- The Archdiocese itself has:
  - 142 parishes, of which only 70 will be able to hold Eucharistic celebrations this coming weekend of October 1. Of the remainder, perhaps 60 are seriously damaged or destroyed.
  - 220 diocesan and 195 religious priests, 800 religious sisters and 186 deacons
- The Archdiocese of New Orleans is trying to address the following needs:
  - Basic human needs of its staff, parishioners and the general public
  - Cash flow to keep operations going, especially as collections suffer through the disruption
  - Damage to churches, schools and other buildings

(The 12-county Diocese of Rochester has approximately 350,000 Catholics and more than 150 faith communities.)

“Through these efforts over several years, the people of both dioceses expect to gain a richer understanding of their own faith, new friendships and a larger sense of God’s work in the world,” Bishop Clark said.

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