

Catholic Charities USA presents \$3 million for immediate, emergency assistance for Hurricane Harvey relief 100 percent of funds go directly to immediate and long-term recovery efforts

About \$3 million in funds raised by donors across the country to be given to Catholic Charities agencies impacted by Hurricane Harvey to assist in their immediate and long-term disaster response efforts was announced and checks were presented by Sister Donna Markham, president and CEO of Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA), in an event on Labor Day, Sept. 4, at Catholic Charities of San Antonio headquarters.

CCUSA's Mobile Response Center (MRC) vehicle, which is filled with emergency supplies, recently departed from Alexandria, Va., for Texas and was present at the event. The MRC will remain in Texas and is currently headed to the coast to assist Catholic Charities agencies with response efforts.

Others present at the check presentations in addition to Sister Markham were Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller, MSPS, of San Antonio, Bishop Brendan J. Cahill of the neighboring Diocese of Victoria, which has suffered damage from the hurricane; J. Antonio Fernandez, president/CEO of Archdiocese of San Antonio Catholic Charities; Bishop Emeritus Michael Pfeifer, OMI, of the Diocese of San Angelo; and Msgr. J. Brian Bransfield, general secretary of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). The USCCB has requested that all Catholic parishes in the U.S. take up a special collection for Hurricane Harvey relief work.

Also, representatives from Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, Catholic Charities Southeast Texas, and Catholic Charities of Corpus Christi were in San Antonio for the presentation, as the Alamo city is serving as a hub from which relief operations can be based.

Earlier in the day, Sister Markham, Msgr. Bransfield, and Fernandez met with and thanked volunteers at the site of the former St. Stephen's Church in southwest San Antonio, as volunteers and Catholic Charities employees were sorting through and stacking truckloads of donations that will soon be shipped to the thousands of victims of the hurricane-force winds and flooding from Harvey.

"The \$3 million already raised by Catholic Charities USA for immediate and long-term recovery efforts is a testament to the generous spirit and always-ready willingness of Catholics across the country to lend a helping hand to their neighbors in need," said Archbishop Gustavo. "We have all seen the images of the unprecedented destruction which this massive natural disaster has wrought. It will be years before some areas of Texas and Louisiana recover."

Catholic Charities has been and will continue to be one of the primary responders to this tragedy. He continued, "The organization has a professional, well-developed system of reviewing the needs and providing help where it can accomplish the most good. That is why I urged all of the entities of our archdiocese to coordinate their relief efforts through Catholic Charities." The archbishop expressed that he was grateful beyond words for the funds as well as for the multitude of efforts that will continue in the weeks, months, and years ahead.

"However, most of all, the prayers for the victims and those suffering from the effects of Hurricane Harvey have provided the peace and strength needed to undertake this vital work of relief, recovery, and rebuilding, as Pope Francis has stated."