



March 13, 2011

My Dear Friends in Christ,

As you have seen in the news, the catastrophic devastation in the country of Japan caused by one of the largest earthquakes in modern times and a 33-foot tall tsunami is indeed incomprehensible in scope. The death toll is rising each day. Images of displaced families, destroyed coastlines and farmland, burning neighborhoods and industries, homes and buildings are vivid reminders of the unfathomable destruction.

In times like these our Christian faith calls upon us to support the efforts to bring emergency assistance and long term relief. Catholic Relief Services, as in the case of the earthquake in Haiti a little over a year ago, is once again assisting in these efforts through Caritas Japan, the humanitarian organization of the Japanese Catholic Conference. Caritas Japan is beginning to assess the needs in that country where the tsunami has caused extensive damage.

CRS has programs in the Philippines and Indonesia and works with Caritas Oceania that is active in numerous islands in the Pacific that might be affected. Central American countries where CRS works could also be in danger.

Monetary donations may be sent to CRS through their web site www.crs.org/japan. Also I am asking all parishes in our diocese to consider taking up a collection at the earliest convenience to be sent to CRS.

As our State of Mississippi has suffered the horrific destructive forces of nature through hurricanes, floods and tornados, we can certainly empathize with the people of Japan. Let us all offer our fervent heartfelt prayers for the victims of this tragedy and for those on the ground assisting in the immediate and long-term recovery process.

+Joseph N. Latino
Bishop of Jackson