



13 January 2010

Appeal to the Pastors and Faithful of the Catholic Church in Canada

The impact on the people of Haiti is enormous, following the massive 12 January 2010 earthquake centring on the region of its capital, Port-au-Prince. Although reliable estimates on the human casualties are not yet available, reports indicate that much of the city is in rubble, thousands are feared dead, and hundreds of thousands left homeless. Three million people are in need of disaster relief – which represents one-third of the nation's total population. Among the many whose deaths are deplored in the earthquake is the Archbishop of Port-au-Prince, Most Reverend Serge Miot.

Earlier today, the Holy Father appealed for assistance to Haiti. Speaking at the end of the General Audience, Pope Benedict XVI called for international generosity and solidarity toward our Haitian brothers and sisters who are suffering and in need, and gave his assurances that the Catholic Church will provide immediate and urgent assistance.

As President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, I invite all the Bishops of Canada to join me in urging all Canadian Catholics and people of goodwill to pray fervently and to respond quickly and generously to the needs of the people of Haiti in this hour of urgent need. We also wish to assure our brothers and sisters in Canada who are of Haitian origin that we are united with them in prayer and action.

Our Conference joins with the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace in launching a joint emergency campaign for Haiti. We will be working closely with Development and Peace – which is also officially Caritas Canada – in helping to organize and promote this appeal, as well as in assuring appropriate follow-up with the Church in Haiti and with its Episcopal Conference. Development and Peace has already launched its appeal for Haiti by immediately sending \$50,000 in emergency assistance to Caritas Haiti. In addition to special parish collections that the Bishops of Canada may be authorizing in their respective dioceses, contributions for Haiti can also be made directly through the Development and Peace website.

May the Holy Spirit touch all hearts so that we are worthy followers of Jesus Christ in our generosity and solidarity by responding to this emergency campaign for Haiti.

+ Pierre Morissette
Bishop of Saint-Jérôme
President
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops