

January 14, 2010

TO: Priests, Deacons and the People of the Diocese of Sioux Falls
FROM: Most Rev. Paul J. Swain
RE: Responding to the Haiti earthquake

The recent earthquake in Haiti has devastated hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of lives, many of whom already were living in deep poverty. Scores of homes, schools, hospitals, government buildings, roads, bridges, churches, including the Cathedral in Port au Prince, have been destroyed. The Archbishop of Port au Prince, priests, religious and lay ministers reportedly were killed in the aftermath of this natural disaster. Many from our diocese have undertaken mission work in Haiti and are personally familiar with the beauty of the people. Our sadness of heart and concern for those so tragically affected goes out to all the people of Haiti.

The country of Haiti has very limited resources with which to respond to this terrible, natural disaster and its aftermath. As Catholics we are called in charity to reach out to our brothers and sisters in need with prayer and shared resources. Therefore I am authorizing a special collection be taken this weekend or next at the discretion of the pastor. Funds collected will be sent to Catholic Relief Services which is already on site. I encourage all personal donations through this collection or through other fundraising means be made through Catholic Relief Services (CRS). The agency is experienced in addressing disasters, directing aid to where needs are the greatest while incurring minimal administrative expense. CRS is accountable to the Bishops of the United States. Please forward the proceeds of this special collection to the Finance Office of the Diocese. Thank you for your generosity.

Let us pray that those so tragically touched by this earthquake receive the physical help and spiritual support they need. May Our Lady and St. Joseph be with them.