

# **Archdiocese's Holy Childhood Association appeals to schools to help Haitian students**

As part of a relief and response plan to Haiti's victims of the recent devastating storms, The Holy Childhood Association (HCA) of the archdiocese's Missions office is making a faith-filled appeal to archdiocesan schools for help in collecting school supplies.

A collection drive is being spearheaded to help the children of Gonaives who have lost everything - family members, homes, school ... "down to their backpacks," said Deacon Rodrigue Mortel, director.

"As our Catholic faith calls us to serve our brothers and sisters," said Kelly Hellmuth, HCA project coordinator, in a letter to schools, "and in the spirit of the mission of the HCA, we are asking urgently for your school's participation in our school supplies drive."

The children no longer have the basic supplies to be educated, she said. Even when the schools are repaired and reopen, there will be no pens, pencils, paper, glue, or scissors.

"This must be corrected," she said. "We can make it possible."

Effective Mission Sunday, Oct. 19, and concluding Nov. 21, the missions office will pick up supplies from schools and ship them to Haiti for distribution. The school collecting the most supplies will be awarded a small handmade token of appreciation from a child in Gonaives.

In the mailing, Ms. Hellmuth included a supply list, and a letter and photos to share with students.

"Sadly, the photos I do not share are so shocking," she said, "it wrenches my heart to think these children have witnessed such tragedy ... this is a most desperate

situation.”

In the overall efforts to help the people in Haiti, the relief and response plan was developed by Hands Together (offices in the U.S. and Haiti) and financial contributions are being collected following a solicitation letter from Deacon Mortel to all pastors in the archdiocese.

Areas of intervention include repair equipment/offices, food, water, cleanup/employment, housing and health care. The highest percentage of money collected will be used to assist the schools in Gonaives.

The plan zeroes in to tackling many overwhelming details, such as “create 10 teams of 10 students not in school, and begin street by street cleanup, aided by backhoe loader and dump trucks ... remove mud from houses and treat with anti-bacterial solution ... provide fresh drinking water to many neighborhoods by filling commercial water truck from water wells ... water truck will also hose down streets and houses after clean up efforts.”

*To donate to cleanup efforts in Haiti, send checks to Missions Office, Archdiocese of Baltimore, 320 Cathedral Street, Baltimore, MD 21201.*