

# Pope sends envoy, funds for Haiti on earthquake anniversary

VATICAN CITY - Pope Benedict XVI offered special prayers and a \$1.2 million contribution to Haiti as the country struggled to recover a year after a deadly earthquake.

The pope, speaking at his noon blessing at the Vatican Jan. 9, announced that he was sending a top Vatican official to Haiti to express his "continual closeness and that of the entire church" to the people of the Caribbean nation.

"At this moment of Marian prayer, I wish to reserve a particular thought for the people of Haiti, one year after the terrible earthquake, which has unfortunately been followed by a serious cholera epidemic," the pope said.

More than 1 million Haitians continue to live in hundreds of temporary settlements that sprouted after the magnitude 7 earthquake struck on Jan. 12, 2010. At least 230,000 people were killed. Cholera has claimed more than 3,600 lives over the past three months.

The pope said Cardinal Robert Sarah, head of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum, will travel to the Caribbean nation as it marks the anniversary of the earthquake. The pontifical council coordinates international Catholic charitable activities.

Cardinal Sarah was bringing funds collected by the Vatican for Haiti's recovery: \$800,000 for reconstruction of schools and \$400,000 for reconstruction of churches.

The Vatican said Cardinal Sarah would read a papal message during a Mass Jan. 12. The cardinal was scheduled to meet with Haitian President Rene Preval Jan. 11 and celebrate Mass in the Terrain Acra settlement camp in the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince.

Cardinal Sarah was also visiting with members of three religious orders that ran a hospital, a home for the elderly, a center for AIDS and tuberculosis patients and a school. All were damaged or destroyed in the earthquake. He was also to lay the

foundation stone for a new church-run school.

Before leaving Haiti, Cardinal Sarah was to celebrate Mass Jan. 13 at the convent of the Daughters of Mary, where 15 sisters died in the collapse of a convent building.

In Rome, meanwhile, the Vatican secretary of state, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, was scheduled to celebrate a commemorative Mass Jan. 12 in the Basilica of St. Mary Major. The diplomatic corps at the Vatican and in Rome were invited to attend.