

Second collection to fund disaster aid

When parishioners in the Archdiocese of Baltimore drop donations in the basket for the second collection Feb. 16 and 17, their dollars will help Catholic Relief Services address humanitarian emergency needs – big and small, domestic and abroad.

It will also fund pastoral grants for faith communities in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The collection is taken up annually during Lent. It funds critical emergency relief in disaster areas and assists “the voiceless worldwide through advocacy and legislative efforts,” said Sister Mary Ann Walsh, R.S.M., of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Formerly known as the American Bishops’ Overseas Appeal, the CRS/Church in Latin America collection funds a variety of programs, including refugee assistance, advocacy, relief and recovery in emergencies and resettlement for victims of natural disasters, conflict or persecution, Sister Mary Ann said.

“Generous support from Catholics for this collection has provided funding for the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Catholic Relief Services, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Departments of Migration and Refugee Services and Justice, Peace and Human Development, The Holy Father’s Relief Fund and the USCCB Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church,” she said.

With 50 percent of the collection going to the Church in Latin America, the grants will assist in the formation of priests, religious, lay ministers, missionaries, youth ministers and catechists in 23 Latin American and Caribbean nations, said Sue Elias, director of volunteer resources for St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore.

Last year Catholics in the Archdiocese of Baltimore donated about \$200,000 for this collection, Ms. Elias said.