

TO: Concerned Individuals

FROM: Rev. Kenneth J. Doyle, Chancellor for Public Information

DATE: August 26, 2011

RE: SPECIAL COLLECTION – desperate needs of the poor in East Africa

Every day we are seeing more and more heartbreaking news about the drought and famine in Somalia and the eastern parts of Africa. We see millions of people being forced from their homes, leaving behind what meager possessions they had, and walking for days over rough terrain. There are parents whose little children have died, and children who have been orphaned. They are suffering from hunger, thirst, disease, and drought. It is a humanitarian crisis that cries out for help to Christians throughout the world. The Holy Father, on several occasions, has asked Catholics to respond generously to the desperate needs of our brothers and sisters in East Africa.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is already on the ground, providing as much aid as they can with current resources. As our official international relief agency, *CRS* is experienced at dealing with all aspects of such a humanitarian disaster and have a proven track record—even navigating difficult situations like in Somalia—which justifies our confidence. As an agency of the Church, they help Catholics in the United States perform countless acts of charity. Through *CRS* we reach out to Christ in our neighbors as our Lord himself said “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me,” (Mt. 25:35).

In the past we have asked individuals to have an opportunity to give donations in a special collection at the parish level. Individuals would donate to the Parish and the Parish, in turn, would send one check to Catholic Charities.

Donate:

Through your Parish	Directly to Catholic Charities
Write a check made payable to the Parish Memo portion: Africa Drought Response	Write a check to : Catholic Charities 40 North Main Avenue Albany, New York 12203 Memo portion: Africa Drought Response

Each parish is asked to inform their parishioners of the great need of the people affected by the East Africa Drought and the efforts of the diocese to contribute monetary support to aid the people of this area through CRS. We encourage you to select a weekend to collect donations from your parish community. Understanding the individual parish commitments you may have we will leave the particular date of the collection up to the parish leaders. A Parish may choose to make a donation without calling for a collection.

See attached:

Suggestions for upcoming Bulletin or Pulpit Announcement
Prayer and General Intercessions
Talking Points for East Africa Drought.

Horn of Africa Prayer and General Intercessions

Prayer

Gracious and Loving God,

As witnesses to the drought in East Africa, continue to provide your people with hearts of service, compassion and solidarity.

Console our sisters and brothers living with uncertainty and the scarcity of food.

Guide our leaders that they might work together to offer solutions to the needs of the people in East Africa.

May your grace remind us that you are the source of justice; your mastery over all things makes you lenient to all.

Continue to gather us in your name so as your children we embrace our sisters and brothers as we respond to your call.

You call us your people. You taught us to be just and you gave us good ground for hope.

Lord, help us to respond to the needs of our brothers and sisters in the coming weeks.

Mold us in your will so that our brothers and sisters will see you reflected in our response.

We ask this through your son, Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever.

All: Amen.



General Intercessions

Response: Gracious God, hear our prayer

For the church, that we may work together with our leaders to respond to the devastation of the drought impacting East Africa, we pray to the Lord

Response: Gracious God, hear our prayer

For world leaders, including political leaders and international organizations, that their response to the drought in East Africa will reflect your will and demonstrate cooperation, we pray to the Lord

Response: Gracious God, hear our prayer

For people in East Africa who are losing hope, who feel abandoned as a result of conflicts, drought, death and the visible threat of famine, may God's people remind them of God's love and providence, we pray to the Lord

Response: Gracious God, hear our prayer

For those of us gathered here, continue to teach us about your way so that we might understand and build the kingdom of God, we pray to the Lord

Response: Gracious God, hear our prayer

Talking Points: East Africa Drought

Prepared by: Catholic Relief Services' Communications Department

Date: August 5, 2011

Background:

The crisis in the Horn of Africa is intensifying, and more than 12 million people are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance in Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia because of what many are calling the worst drought in decades. Famine has now been declared in a total of five regions of South Central Somalia, including parts of the capital Mogadishu that are hosting displaced people. Famine conditions are predicted to spread to even more areas of southern Somalia unless there is a massive increase in the humanitarian response.

Refugees from Somalia are fleeing into Kenya and Ethiopia, with approximately 2,000 people arriving each day. The Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya near the Somali border sees as many as 1,300 refugees arrive daily. Further compounding this drought - it's one of the driest years in the region since 1950-51 - are drastic increases in food prices.

CRS' Response:

The CRS response to this current emergency will address the immediate needs of the drought-affected population while looking at medium and long-term strategies to mitigate the impact of future droughts. In the past few years, CRS has worked in drought-affected communities by helping people to access and protect water sources, providing drought resistant seeds and training on drought-specific agriculture techniques and implementing early warning systems.

Kenya:

- In the past three years alone CRS has provided 91 water points to local communities, helped to create tree nurseries with more than 3.7 million seedlings, worked to get more than 2500 miles of agricultural terraces built, and provided more than 108,000 female goats to our beneficiaries.
- A CRS team is on the ground in the eastern Kenyan town of Dadaab, home to a sprawling refugee camp that sees some 1,300 people arriving each day from drought-stricken Somalia. CRS will be providing 10,000 hygiene kits to newly arriving families from Somalia in the Hagadeera camp.

Ethiopia:

- In Ethiopia, the CRS-led Joint Emergency Operations Plan is ramping up its feeding program from nearly 600,000 people in May and June to slightly over 1 million in July and August, with the goal of reaching 1.1 million in August and September.

Somalia:

- Working with partners, CRS has been able to get some aid into the stricken areas of Somalia and is assisting displaced families throughout the country with basic necessities. Assistance includes food packages, support to clinics, therapeutic feeding, and shelter assistance.

Special Bulletin Announcement: Horn of Africa Drought Emergency

The worst drought in East Africa since 1951 is affecting over 12 million people. The United Nations has declared a famine in Somalia. Families are facing starvation as they leave what little they have and stream into Ethiopia and Kenya in search of food.

Catholic Relief Services, the official international relief and development agency of the Catholic community in the U.S., is responding by helping to feed thousands and provide clean water, shelter and other life-saving goods. CRS is also expanding its ongoing water and agriculture projects in East Africa which have made the communities already participating much more resilient to the drought.

Your continued prayers and support are needed to help address the desperate needs of our brothers and sisters in East Africa. To donate, make your check payable to the parish - in the memo portion of the check write: Africa Drought Response. Our parish will send one check to Catholic Charities and 100% of the donation will go to CRS. For additional info. call 518-453-6650.