

Archdiocese of Detroit

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In the Wake of Ivan

Prayers and Financial Aid for “Sister Parish” in the Cayman Islands Detroit’s Cardinal-Archbishop Calls For Special Relief Effort

As a gesture of solidarity with the people suffering from the effects of Hurricane Ivan, Cardinal Adam Maida is requesting all parishes of the Archdiocese of Detroit to remember in prayer “our sister parish” of [St. Ignatius, Grand Cayman](#). He is also asking each parish to take up a second collection for the recovery needs of the parish the weekend of September 25-26.

At the request of our Holy Father, in 2000, the Detroit archdiocese accepted pastoral responsibility for the Church in the Cayman Islands. The Cayman Islands are located 480 miles south of Miami in the western Caribbean. Over the last few decades, many other large archdioceses in the United States also have been asked to assume pastoral care for other Caribbean Islands.

“The whole island is devastated and over half the property is gone, washed away into the sea,” said Fr. Graeme Thomson of St. Ignatius Parish. “It’s a nightmare. We have no electricity, food or water. Martial law is in effect and we’re under a curfew. Everyone is walking around in kind of a daze.”

The only Catholic parish, St. Ignatius, is located in George Town on Grand Cayman. In addition to the church in George Town, the parish also maintains a chapel of the far side of the island and a school. Fr. Michael Molnar of the Archdiocese has been pastor there since 2000.

“Fr. Molnar was in the Florida when Ivan hit,” said Fr. Thomson. “He’s trying his best to get back, but the government here is helping people get off the island, not back on.”

According to Fr. Thomson, St. Ignatius church, rectory and school suffered severe wind and water damage. All the windows were shattered, the interiors littered with debris and there was damage to the roofs and shingles. The basic structures, although compromised, remain standing.

The parishioners of St. Ignatius were not so lucky. “In many cases, homes were just washed away, ” said Fr. Thomson. “Whole condos are gone; all that remains are cement slabs. No one was prepared for a Category 5 hurricane.”

Fortunately, there does not appear to be any casualties among the parishioners. Fr. Thomson reports that a macabre result of the hurricane is that tombs have opened up and that bodies that had been buried are floating among the debris.

“No one knows when the electricity and telephone land lines will be restored and food and water are in extremely short supply,” he continued. “It is a nightmare, people begin lining up and 6 a.m. and are not given any food or water until noon. We really could use some help.”

Help is on the way in the form of a special collection to be held on September 25-26 in parishes throughout the Archdiocese of Detroit. Between now and then, those wishing to assist St. Ignatius should go to the archdiocesan web site at www.AODonline.org for the latest information and updates.

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