



Mission Office - Diocese of San Bernardino



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July 1, 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Mission,

Grace and peace to you in Christ.

Today, I write to you with a heavy heart and an urgent appeal for our brothers and sisters in Venezuela.

On the evening of June 24, two powerful earthquakes—measuring 7.2 and 7.5 in magnitude—struck within seconds of each other, leaving behind unimaginable devastation. It is the country's worst earthquake disaster in more than a century.

[More than 1,700 people have lost their lives](#), tens of thousands remain missing, and countless families have been left without homes, food, or even the comfort of knowing where their loved ones are. Entire neighborhoods in Caracas and the coastal state of La Guaira have been reduced to rubble. Behind every statistic is a human story—a grieving family, a frightened child, an elderly person searching for hope amid overwhelming loss.

In the midst of this tragedy, the Church has become a powerful sign of hope.

From the very first moments after the earthquakes, parish churches opened their doors to shelter families with nowhere else to go. Priests, religious, and lay volunteers have been working tirelessly to provide food, clean water, medical supplies, comfort, and prayer to those who have lost everything. Archbishop Raúl Biord Castillo of Caracas has called upon all the faithful to become "*a great network of solidarity*," reminding us that the love of Christ is most visible when we carry one another's burdens.

[Our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, has already responded with compassion by sending an emergency donation](#) through the Dicastery for the Service of Charity, assuring the people of Venezuela of the prayers and closeness of the universal Church.

[Bishop A. Elias Zaidan of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops](#) has also called the international community to respond generously. He reminds us:

"As rescue efforts are underway, I urge the international community to mobilize in support of the Venezuelan people and to send the necessary humanitarian assistance to alleviate their suffering."

As followers of Christ, we cannot remain indifferent to the suffering of our brothers and sisters. Their pain is our pain. Their tears are our tears. When one member of the Body of Christ suffers, we are all called to respond with compassion, generosity, and love.



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The road to recovery will be long. While the headlines may eventually fade, families will continue to struggle to rebuild their homes, their communities, and their lives. Today, we have an opportunity to be instruments of God's mercy.

I humbly ask you to join me in praying for the people of Venezuela and, if you are able, to make a financial contribution to support the Church's ongoing relief efforts.

Donations may be made directly through Catholic Relief Services (CRS) at:

<https://www.crs.org/donate/venezuela-earthquake>

You may also send your donation through the Diocese of San Bernardino by making your check payable to: **Diocese of San Bernardino**

All donations received by the Diocese will be forwarded to Catholic Relief Services to provide emergency assistance and long-term recovery for those most affected.

Thank you for opening your hearts to this urgent need. Your prayers, generosity, and solidarity are powerful signs of God's love for those who are suffering. Together, we can remind the people of Venezuela that they are not alone—that the Church stands with them, prays for them, and walks beside them in hope.

May Our Lady of Coromoto, Patroness of Venezuela, intercede for all who mourn, protect those who continue the work of rescue and relief, and bring comfort, healing, and peace to every family affected by this tragedy.

United in prayer and mission,

Fr. Duong Nguyen, SVD
Director of the Mission Office
Diocese of San Bernardino