



Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee

Office of the Bishop

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Oct. 12, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings in the Lord. In the aftermath of what was a catastrophic hurricane that went through the Florida Panhandle on Wednesday, we are assessing some of the damage and devastation. Thanks be to God, all of our priests and employees are accounted for, as personal injury seems to have been kept to a minimum given the size of the storm.

At the same time, so many people have lost everything: homes, property, and even their livelihood. The scenes of destruction are heart-wrenching, knowing that when we see a place where there once was a house, a family used to live there and are now homeless. In the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee, many of our structures (buildings, parish halls, rectories, etc.) have been damaged – some to the point where they are a total loss. And, of course, there are trees down everywhere. Our parishes in the Panama City area were hit the hardest, as were churches in Port St. Joe, Mexico Beach, and Blountstown.

Thanks be to God, we have insurance and will be looking to rebuild our beloved parishes and schools. This will be a long-term recovery project, but I know that we will come together and do what we need to pull through this. Unfortunately, hurricanes are not something new to this part of the world, and I have been told that most folks know what to do in these situations. I ask you to please help out if you are able, either through contributing supplies or funds, or through assisting in the rebuilding efforts that will come.

We will work very hard to provide at least a temporary place in which to celebrate weekend Masses in those areas where the church building was lost or is deemed unsafe. Obviously, if it is not safe – or possible – to attend Mass on a Sunday, you are not obligated to go. Your safety is most important.

Please know that you are in my prayers. I am praying that St. Michael the Archangel (co-patron of our Diocese) intercede for us and help us in this critical time. This is God's Church, and He will make it possible for us to continue to practice our Faith, serve one another, and serve Him.

God bless you. I am,

Your Brother in Christ,
Most Rev. William A. Wack, CSC