



DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your generous financial support of Catholic Relief Services' (CRS) efforts to aid our brothers and sisters in Haiti whose lives have been so devastated by the Jan. 12 earthquake. Your effective support is a means by which we continue the mission of the church and the healing work of Christ.

More than \$651,000 in donations has been collected for CRS through the diocese including more than \$580,000 in parish collections and individual donations totaling \$66,182. CRS, which has been delivering direct aid to Haiti for over 50 years, is the official international humanitarian agency of the Catholic Church. With your help, CRS has:

- Delivered medical care and treatment to an estimated 12,000 people, and hygiene kits to more than 10,000 people.
- Provided food to 597,989 people at Petionville Golf Club camp, downtown Port-au-Prince and outside areas. Distributed roughly 30,903 ready-to-eat food kits and other dry food rations that have helped over 277, 818 people. CRS has also distributed rice to support 49,699 families.
- Distributed emergency shelter kits to an estimated 9,100 families in two camps.

Thank you for your charitable and timely response to this tragedy. I ask for your continuing prayers for victims of the earthquake as they rebuild their lives, homes, and families.

Sincerely yours in the Lord,

Most Reverend Walter A. Hurley
Bishop of Grand Rapids

CATHEDRAL SQUARE CENTER ◊ 360 DIVISION AVENUE S.
GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49503-4501 ◊ P:616-243-0491 ◊ F:616-243-4910

WWW.DIOCESEOFGRANDRAPIDS.ORG



Welcoming the new born

>> Msgr. Gaspar F. Ancona is a senior priest of the Catholic Diocese of Grand Rapids.



here's nothing quite like the welcome that parents give their new born. How often they talk to their infant and nurture many a dream for their growing child, as the weeks and months fly by. In this season of nature's rebirth and of the Lord's resurrection, the Christian community is nurturing its own dreams for those who are new born among us in the faith we share in Christ Risen.

Neophytes we call them, as they spring like new shoots from the living vine who is Christ. Who are they? They are young and old, from every walk of life, and they have been on a long pilgrimage. Somehow (another way of saying "by the grace of God") their life's journey brought them to your particular parish or Catholic community. It may have been the example of a friend that motivated them or the encouragement of a future spouse or the culmination of different events in their own lives that finally brought them to search for a deeper understanding of Christ. Your parish family was ready to greet them on their journey and walk with them. They met teachers in your parish who helped them know the Lord better and learn about the Church. They were introduced to sponsors who guided them along the way and linked them with other people and activities in the community. They prayed and studied the word of God.

Gradually, these candidates, who had already been baptized in the past in a Christian community, and the catechumens who were seeking their introduction to Christ, became assimilated into the life of prayer which characterizes our Catholic communities and into our apostolic and social activities. They were dutifully scrutinized, and they were handed on some of the great prayers of the historic Christian community, not just to memorize, but as we used to say in a more descriptive phrase, "to learn by heart," another way of saying "to cherish."

Now at the Easter Vigil they have been solemnly and joyously welcomed into our communities through baptism, confirmation and the holy Eucharist. Complete their welcome with your friendship for them. Share with them the dreams you have been nurturing for their place in the community of faith. Allow them to share their dreams as well.