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MEMORANDUM

To: All bishops

From: Monsignor Ronny E. Jenkins, General Secretary 

Date: January 22, 2013

Subject: Hurricane Sandy Relief Update

Your Eminence / Your Excellency,

As you will recall, after consultation with the Committee on National Collections, Catholic Charities USA, and Catholic Relief Services, Archbishop Joseph Kurtz, USCCB Vice-President, sent a letter to the bishops on December 4, 2012, inviting them to take up a second collection during the Advent and Christmas seasons to bring relief to those dioceses affected by *Hurricane Sandy*. To date the special Hurricane Sandy Recovery Collection has been very successful, raising \$6,253,971.86 from 79 dioceses. We know that collections are still being held and that more funds are still to come.

These funds are available at this time. As Archbishop Kurtz explained in his letter, the funds will be used to support the efforts of the USCCB with regard to the pastoral and reconstruction needs of the dioceses impacted and the work of *Catholic Charities* (CCUSA), to respond to immediate emergency needs. While we try to assess the extent of the church needs, CCUSA is already utilizing \$1.5 million that came directly from dioceses.

If a bishop wishes to make a request for use of a portion of the funds for Church pastoral and reconstruction needs from the special collection, he is invited to write to Most Reverend Dennis Schnurr, Archbishop of Cincinnati and Chairman of the Committee on National Collections. This will help give a better understanding of the needs so the USCCB and CCUSA can determine what percentage of the collection will be available for humanitarian relief through CCUSA and other relief through the USCCB.

I am happy to report as well that the response to *Hurricane Sandy* by CCUSA in the places hardest hit by the storm has been timely and dedicated. This response has been possible because of the immediate generosity of many people throughout the country. So far CCUSA has raised \$6.5 million for its humanitarian response. Also *Catholic Relief Services* (CRS) has been tirelessly working to respond to the devastation the hurricane left behind in Cuba and Haiti, thanks especially to dioceses that were able to immediately send relief funds to CRS. The USCCB Subcommittee on the Church in Latin America is working with the dioceses in Cuba to assess the damage to many parishes and help in the effort to rebuild. Funds from the regular Collection for the Church in Latin America will be used to assist the Cuban and Haitian Churches.

Additionally, The Sandy \$50.5 billion relief package was approved last Tuesday evening by the House of Representatives. The Senate is in recess but will pick up the bill when the members return next week. We are hopeful that it will pass easily and will then be signed President Obama.

Due to current policy from the administration, it appears houses of worship are being discriminated against from receiving relief funds. There were similar examples of discrimination in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. We have been working with, among others, the *Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America* to advance a legislative amendment that would provide protections from discrimination for houses of worship in obtaining critically needed relief. We continue our efforts in this regard in all ways possible.

Thank you for your kind attention to this memorandum. Please let me know if we can be of further assistance to you.