



May 24, 2008

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Images of the recent cyclone in Myanmar and the earthquake in China are jarring and heart-rending. We have seen displaced families searching for food and mothers and fathers mourning lost children. These victims must remain in our prayers, especially in the coming months, as they work to rebuild their towns and to overcome these tragedies.

In considering these natural disasters, one cannot help but think of Pope Benedict's recent words to us during his visit to the United States, "America has traditionally shown herself generous in meeting immediate human needs, fostering development and offering relief to the victims of natural catastrophes. I am confident this concern for the greater human family will **continue** . . ." (Pope Benedict XVI, Address on the South Lawn of the White House, 16 April 2008).

It is in this spirit that I ask you to give generously to the second collection on Saturday, May 31 and Sunday, June 1. Donations from this collection will be sent from our diocesan office directly to Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the international humanitarian organization that is committed to obtaining food, shelter and medical care for the victims of these natural disasters. A coordinated effort within the diocese will ensure a thorough response to this emergency.

The people of the Diocese of Arlington often make visible the person of Christ Our Hope to others through their astounding generosity. In recent years, I have been moved by your willingness to sacrifice your own gifts and possessions to aid those who have been victims of natural disasters, such as those devastated by earthquakes, floods and hurricanes. Once again, it is time for us to assist in sustaining "the greater human family" through both material aid and prayerful support.

Walking with you in hope and praying for you daily, I remain

Faithfully in Christ,

+ Paul S. Loverde

Most Reverend Paul S. Loverde
Bishop of Arlington