



THE DIOCESE OF
HOUMA THIBODAUX

OFFICE OF BISHOP SHELTON J. FABRE

September 1, 2021

My Brother Bishops:

I write to today from ground zero of the aftermath of Hurricane Ida. On August 29th, Hurricane Ida made landfall in the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux with sustained winds of 150 mph and gusts over 165 mph. Hurricane Ida was the most intense hurricane on record to hit Louisiana. I visited all our church parishes once it was safe to do so. Also, thank God, all of our priests are safe.

I want to convey to you the reality of what we are facing as a small diocese. However, as of today, there is no power in either Terrebonne Parish (county) or in Lafourche Parish (county), and no running water in most of the diocese. Cellular towers were destroyed and cell service is unreliable, so there is difficulty in communicating. Estimates are that electrical power will not return for weeks or longer. The two hospitals in Terrebonne Parish were damaged and evacuated and are closed. One hospital in Lafourche Parish lost its roof and is closed, and the other 2 hospitals in Lafourche Parish are either stretched to the limit or operating at minimal capacity. Therefore, there is no hospital care in most of the diocese. The most sobering statistic is that initial estimates are that 90% of the homes in the southern area of the diocese have major damage. Furthermore, of this 90%, an estimated 60% of these homes are uninhabitable. Finally, of the 39 church parishes in the diocese, 36 of them have damage, and many have serious damage.

I write to you today hoping to help you appreciate the reality of where we are and what we are facing and to ask for your help. How can you help? I would like to introduce one of the Vicars General of the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux, Very Rev. Mark Toups, V.G., whom I have appointed as Director of Disaster Response. After consulting with Fr. Mark, we would like to invite you to consider helping us in at least one of three ways:

- First, our immediate need will be in crisis response and volunteer management. You may have leaders in your diocese who have a specific expertise in crisis response and volunteer management who would be interested in spending a week or two or more as part of our disaster response leadership team. If they are interested in helping, they may contact mtoups@htdiocese.org.
- Second, of course we will need resources, both financial and physical. If you have questions about what we need and how to send it, please visit www.catholiccharitiesht.org/ida or be in communication with Bishop Fabre.
- Third, it is our hope and goal to have every parish in our diocese “sponsored” in partnership with another parish across the country. If you have a parish or parishes that would like to twin with our parishes, please contact twin@htdiocese.org.

I pray that you might prayerfully consider one of the above options and help us to respond to these challenges that we face. Of course, I appreciate your prayerful support and am grateful that you will remember the faithful of our diocese before the altar of the Lord. I am grateful for your consideration of the information in this letter. I remain,

Fraternally in the Lord,

Most Reverend Shelton J. Fabre
Bishop of Houma-Thibodaux