



## Diocese of Belleville Office of the Bishop

September 11, 2019

Eighteen Years Since Nearly 3,000 People Perished in the Terrorist Attack

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Jesus Christ,

As you know, on Sunday, September 1<sup>st</sup>, Hurricane Dorian, a catastrophic Category 5 storm, destroyed churches, schools, homes, and other buildings on the Islands of Grand Bahama and Abaco. As of today, the number of our sisters and brothers who lost their lives has been estimated at nearly 100. However, it is believed that once the missing are recovered, the number will sadly be much higher. I have spoken personally with my friend and fellow Louvain student, The Most Reverend Patrick C. Pinder, Archbishop of Nassau, about the suffering of his people. By his estimate, at least 15,000 modest homes have been destroyed as well as numerous churches, schools, convents, and rectories. Fortunately, since his Cathedral, Chancery, and Residence are on the Island of Nassau they were not damaged since this island escaped the hurricane. Even though many Americans think of the Bahamas as a vacation paradise, with sun-soaked golden beaches, crystal blue ocean waters and luxury vacation resorts, the majority of the Bahamians live in near poverty in extremely modest homes that were easily destroyed by the fury of the worst hurricane ever to make landfall. Archbishop Pinder has asked us to offer whatever assistance we can to help our sisters and brothers in the Catholic Church in the Bahamas to rebuild their community and their lives. This is why I have authorized a special second collection on the weekend of September 28-29, 2019, to which I hope you will be as generous as possible.

To make sure that those most in need receive our help, all funds collected will be sent by the Finance Office of the Diocese of Belleville directly to the Archdiocese of Nassau. In addition to the urgently needed material support, the Archbishop has asked you to join him in praying for the priests, religious, men, women and children of the Bahamas who have suffered such a traumatic calamity. They are enduring the unspeakable grief of the sudden deaths of their closest family members and friends, the loss of their homes (at least 80,000 have been made homeless), the loss of their places of work, the loss of their modest shopping areas, as well as the destruction of their churches and schools that play such an important role in their lives. Therefore, I ask you and your families to pray often for our neighbors south of our country who are enduring such painful losses.

Please be as generous as you can to this important second collection.

Appreciatively yours in Christ,

The Most Reverend Edward K. Braxton, Ph.D., S.T.D.  
Bishop of Belleville

**THE SECOND COLLECTION FOR THE BAHAMAS HURRICANE RELIEF WILL BE HELD AT ST. AUGUSTINE'S THE WEEKEND OF SEPTEMBER 21<sup>ST</sup> & SEPTEMBER 22<sup>ND</sup> DUE TO OUR HAVING ALREADY SCHEDULED A 5<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY COLLECTION THE WEEKEND OF SEPTEMBER 28<sup>TH</sup> & 29<sup>TH</sup>. IF YOU WISH TO HAVE YOUR DONATION RECORDED FOR TAX PURPOSES PLEASE MAKE A NOTE ON YOUR CHECK OR ENVELOPE THAT IT IS FOR THE BAHAMAS!!!!**