



The Holy See

**LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PEOPLE OF NICARAGUA**

*Beloved Brothers in the Episcopate,
Dear Priests and Deacons,
Men and Women Religious,
and Catholic Faithful of Nicaragua*

On the occasion of the Holy Mass which is being celebrated in the town of Posoltega to remember and commend to the Lord the many victims, your relatives and friends, who a month ago lost their lives in the devastation of Hurricane Mitch which struck your beloved nation, causing serious and extensive damage, I wish to join each and every one of you and to express my complete solidarity with the countless people affected by this disaster.

These days Archbishop Paul Josef Cordes, President of the Pontifical Council "Cor Unum", is visiting you and concern for the victims, who have lost not only their loved ones, but also their homes, property, land and means of support.

At this crucial moment in Nicaragua's life, the Pope feels very close to you and encourages you, spurred by your characteristic faith and charity, never to lose hope. At the same time, he wishes to urge each and every one, in his own situation, to collaborate actively in rebuilding the nation's life. For her part, by fostering unity, peace and Christian solidarity, the Church in Nicaragua must likewise be a visible sign that encourages everyone's confidence by constantly proclaiming that Jesus Christ is alive and at your side.

Many countries, institutions and individuals have organized and sent considerable aid to alleviate the disastrous effects of the hurricane. While deeply appreciating these acts of solidarity, I

reiterate my pressing appeal to the various Ecclesial Communities, public and private agencies, as well as to all people of goodwill, that, moved by noble sentiments of brotherhood, they will continue supplying every type of aid to the communities affected and offer them the necessary help in this critical time of destruction and death, in view also of the later reconstruction and normalization of civic life, with a generous and selfless spirit.

Dear brothers and sisters, I commend you to the special protection of the Virgin Mary, Mother of the help less and the suffering, whom you venerate in the mystery of her Immaculate Conception. To her I entrust each and every one of the Ecclesial Communities of Nicaragua on pilgrimage to the Father, that they may remain faithful to Christ in the purity of faith, be strengthened in hope and ever generous in love.

As an expression of all my concern and my closeness to each of you, grant you a special Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 23 November 1998.

IOANNES PAULUS II

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