



228 West Lexington Street
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crs.org / crsespanol.org

December 1, 2014

Your Eminence/Excellency,

As you know, the Ebola virus is bringing tragedy to our brothers and sisters in West Africa -- certainly to the families of those who have died and to the thousands now infected, but also to many others as fear of the disease is damaging economies and threatening the social norms and bonds that hold communities together.

Many Catholics in the United States want to know how they can help. In response to suggestions raised at our general meeting last month, and with the encouragement of Archbishop Kurtz, president of the USCCB, I write to ask you to consider taking up a second collection, at a time convenient for your diocese, to support the work of the Church in combating Ebola. These contributions will help save countless lives of those caught in a desperate situation not of their own making.

In carrying out its gospel mission on behalf of the Catholic community in the United States, Catholic Relief Services has been active in the countries most affected by Ebola – Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. After the outbreak, CRS committed \$1.5 million of its emergency funds and sought support from various donors to further its work in fighting the virus. Without a vaccine or cure, the best weapon against Ebola is information about how to avoid contracting and spreading it. That is the focus of CRS' effort, working with the local Church.

In Liberia, CRS has also been instrumental in helping to reopen a major Catholic health facility that closed when many of its staff died from Ebola. In Sierra Leone, CRS is working to see that those who die of Ebola, their bodies dangerously infectious, receive burials that are both safe and dignified, respectful of culture and customs.

These are difficult tasks and CRS staff members – both international and local – have taken them on with the kind of dedication we have come to expect from our agency. But much work remains to be done, first to contain Ebola and, in the longer term, to lessen the damage it has done.

Donations to this important effort can be sent to Catholic Relief Services, P.O. Box 17090, Baltimore, MD 21297-030, with "Ebola Collection" on the memo line. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Jackie Gardner at 1-866-608-5978.

Please join me in praying for those suffering from the effects of this deadly disease and for the men and women of CRS for their work on our behalf against this and so many other threats to the life and dignity of God's family around the world.

Fraternally yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Paul S. Coakley". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Most Reverend Paul S. Coakley
Archbishop of Oklahoma City
Chairman, Catholic Relief Services Board of Directors