

Collection For Church In Latin America, February 20-21, Highlights Theme 'Keep Faith'

Keep Faith is the theme for the 2010 Collection for the Church in Latin America, to be taken up the weekend of February 20-21 in most parishes. The proceeds of the Collection for the Church in Latin America are distributed to dioceses, parishes and other Catholic institutions throughout Latin America and the Caribbean to provide assistance for the many pastoral needs of the region. In spite of the state of the economy, Catholics across the United States continue to show those in need have a special place in their hearts.

In 2009, the USCCB Subcommittee for the Church in Latin America distributed \$6.8 million among 479 projects. These projects helped promote the Church's work in catechesis, evangelization and training of religious personnel. The formation of 20 novices and 70 junior sisters in Peru, sharing the Gospel message in the Mapuche indigenous communities, and training for 72 Seminarians in the Archdiocese of Monterrey, Mexico, are only a few examples of the many essential works being done to Keep Faith in Latin America.

In August 2009, the subcommittee led a delegation to Cuba to see firsthand how funds were used to rebuild churches and other structures after Hurricanes Gustav and Ike devastated the island in September 2008. While there, they toured the construction site of the new National Seminary, which the collection is also helping to fund. In September, the collection provided funding to a national gathering of catechists in Brazil. And in December, the subcommittee offered help to the Church in El Salvador after damage caused by major flooding.

Archbishop José H. Gomez of San Antonio, chairman of the Subcommittee for the Church in Latin America, said that without U.S. parishioners' generosity, "our solidarity could not take shape into concrete programs of support and evangelization in Latin America. Through your contribution you are being disciples and missionaries at the service of the body of Christ. On behalf of the U.S. bishops, as well as those who benefit from the collection, I offer my heartfelt thanks."