



Dear Parishioners, In May 2017, the city of Gatineau witnessed an abundance of rain which caused serious flooding and extensive damage.

Seventeen months later, tornadoes tore through our city and caused significant damage: destroyed homes, tore off roofs, uprooted trees, flipped over vehicles, thousands of power outages lasting several days, etc. In the hours that followed, disaster victims were evacuated and relocated to homes of relatives or the *Cégep de l'Outaouais*.

That very evening, we offered the city our diocesan center and the basements of neighboring churches to accommodate the victims, however the authorities advised that the *Cégep de l'Outaouais* building would be adequate to urgently accommodate those in need. Food, water and other essential goods were available. A call for volunteers was not necessary, because the overall management was running smoothly.

In solidarity with the men and women affected by the tornadoes, we organized a prayer vigil on Sunday evening at the *Saint-Pierre-Chanel* church, located in one of the most affected areas. Furthermore, our thoughts are with all the first responders and those who continue to assist the disaster victims.

The extent of the damages caused by the tornadoes will likely require a lot of time and money to repair the community. The biggest challenge remains to ensure a continuous presence and long-term help for the disaster victims of this underprivileged neighborhood, who will face challenges in returning to their normal daily routines. Therefore, we highly encourage our parishioners, and all the people of good will to offer their support.

In hopes of providing additional support, the diocesan team has set up a disaster-relief fund for the victims (<https://www.jedonneenligne.org/diocesegatineau/>). All proceeds raised by the Archdiocese through its website will be given to the Canadian Red Cross and the *Saint-Vincent de Paul*. You can also give directly to these organizations through their respective websites.

Please note that the organization *Soutien o sinistrés* offers help to uninsured disaster victims, including the provision of material goods such as furniture and clothing. Disaster victims can submit their request for support, while others can offer their donations at www.soutienosinistres.org.

The tragedies that we encounter in life are occasions to live out the Gospel and to be Christ-like through solidarity and compassion for those affected. Let us seize this opportunity to build a more fraternal world to which we aspire to have with all our hearts.

Mgr Paul-André Durocher

Archbishop of Gatineau

Rodhain Kasuba ***Vicar general***