News
EarthBeat



A New York City worker climbs on a tree to look at the damage it has caused to a house and car during the clean-up after Tropical Storm Isaias in Queens, N.Y., Aug. 5, 2020. High winds associated with the storm toppled trees and disabled utility lines in the New York metropolitan area, cutting power to over 2 million customers.(CNS photo/Brendan McDermid, Reuters)



by Catholic News Service

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Catholic churches, schools and other properties were spared serious damage by a mid-season tropical storm that raced up the East Coast, killing at least six people and leaving more than 3.7 million customers without power.

The storm, named Isaias, came ashore late Aug. 3 as a hurricane near Ocean Isle Beach, North Carolina, in the Diocese of Raleigh, but quickly was downgraded to a tropical storm.

The storm had dissipated over eastern Canada by Aug. 6. Power remained out for thousands of customers in New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania the same day.

Glenmary Fr. Richard Andati, who serves at Holy Spirit Parish in Windsor, North Carolina, said that except for the loss of power for about four hours, the rectory escaped unscathed. However, he said, a tornado spawned by the storm swept through an area south of town.

The twister struck a mobile home park eight miles away, killing two and injuring about 20 people, a Bertie County official said.

"Fortunately, there is no member from my parish who lives where the tornado hit. I have family that lives about five minutes to the scene, but I called them and they are safe," he told NC Catholics, magazine of the Raleigh Diocese.

Daniel Altenau, communications director for Catholic Charities in the diocese, said the agency was working with state and local emergency management officials to determine how best to respond.

To the north, a statute of Mary in a garden on the property of the Sisters of the Visitation in Brooklyn, New York, was spared damaged during the storm despite several trees being toppled in Isaias' high winds.

Two large branches from pine trees narrowly missed the statue while another large tree, estimated at 3 feet in diameter fell about 50 yards from the statue, a post on the cloistered order's blog said.

"Thanks be to God that our statue was spared the storm's destruction," Visitation Sr. Susan Marie, the superior, said in a statement. "We take it as a sing from God in his providence. However, we are praying for those harmed by the storm.

The post said the storm struck on the eve of the feast of the Dedication of the Basilica of St. Mary Major, in Rome.

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