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Pope Francis greets visitors gathered in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican to pray the Angelus

Pope Francis greets visitors gathered in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican to pray the Angelus Sept. 10, 2023. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

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Pope Francis called for solidarity and concrete assistance for all those affected by a devastating earthquake in Morocco.

At least 2,100 people were killed and more than 2,400 people were injured after an earthquake with a magnitude of 6.8 struck central Morocco near Marrakech Sept. 8 after 11 p.m. local time. The World Health Organization estimated more than 300,000 people have been affected in the region.

"I wish to express my proximity to the dear people of Morocco, stricken by a devastating earthquake," the pope said after praying the Angelus with visitors gathered in St. Peter's Square Sept. 10. "I pray for the injured, for those who have lost their lives — so many! — and for their relatives."

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The pope thanked rescue workers and "those who are working to alleviate the suffering of the people; may concrete help on the part of everyone support the population at this tragic time. Let us be close to the people of Morocco!"

The pope also expressed his sadness, prayers and "deep solidarity" with the nation's people in a telegram sent by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, Sept. 9.

The pope, the cardinal said, is praying for the repose of those who have died, healing for those who have been injured and consolation for those mourning the loss of loved ones and homes. The pope, he said, was praying God would "support Moroccans in this ordeal."

The pope offered his "encouragement to civil authorities and rescue services" and invoked God's blessings on everyone "as a token of comfort."

A version of this story appeared in the **Sept 29-Oct 12, 2023** print issue under the headline: Pope prays for those affected by quake in Morocco, urges solidarity.