



Debris is seen outside a damaged church in Chupuro, Peru, July 19, 2026, following the magnitude 5.1 earthquake that struck Central Peru. The earthquake shook the Andes region of Peru July 18, killing at least five people, injuring more than 30 and displacing hundreds, authorities said.(OSV News/Reuters/Yershon Vilca)

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JUNÍN, Peru — July 23, 2026

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After a pair of earthquakes struck the mountainous region of Junín in Peru, the Catholic Church in the country expressed solidarity with victims' families and is coordinating humanitarian aid to help victims, as well as efforts to preserve damaged historic churches.

"We join in the grief of the families mourning their loved ones, raising our prayers for the eternal rest of the deceased, and asking the Lord to grant strength, comfort, and hope to all," the Peruvian bishops' conference said in a statement published July 19.

According to Peru's National Civil Defense Institute, at least five people were killed and 32 wounded after two earthquakes measuring magnitudes of 5.1 and 3.7 struck July 18 in the Chupaca province, located roughly 186 miles east of the Peruvian capital of Lima.

Dozens of homes were destroyed or declared uninhabitable following the earthquake, and several public buildings, including two churches, the institute said, adding that the earthquake also caused damage in Huancayo and Huancavelica.

The Archdiocese of Huancayo said it was coordinating humanitarian efforts through its Caritas office and "is actively participating in first response efforts."

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In a statement published July 19, the archdiocese said Archbishop Luis Alberto Huamán Camayo of Huancayo traveled to the city of Pumpunya, which also suffered significant damage, "to support the affected population, express the Church's solidarity, and coordinate relief efforts with the authorities and emergency teams present in the area."

"Through Caritas Huancayo, humanitarian aid has been distributed consisting of non-perishable food, water, blankets, pots, stoves and other essential items, intended to immediately assist families who lost their homes or were seriously affected by the earthquake," the statement read.

The archdiocese was also assessing damage to several churches and properties, including the El Copón chapel in Pumpunya and the Church of St. James the Apostle in Chongos Bajo.

According to the Peruvian bishops' conference, both religious buildings are National Cultural Heritage sites.

"The Church of St. James the Apostle in Chongos Bajo, built in the 16th century, suffered particularly significant damage, including the partial collapse of the roof and part of the pediment," the bishops said. "The bell tower is also at risk of collapse, and therefore, the necessary actions are being coordinated to protect this important expression of the country's historical and religious heritage."

The conference also said the Archdiocese of Huancayo was coordinating efforts with the cultural office of Junín as well as with the Peruvian Civil Defense office to "carry out the technical evaluation of the affected churches and adopt the necessary measures to guarantee their conservation and the safety of the faithful."

"The Catholic Church reaffirms its commitment to accompany the affected communities and to promote unity and solidarity in these times of emergency," the Peruvian bishops' conference said.

"It also calls for continued support for the affected families and for coordinated efforts in the recovery and reconstruction of the affected areas, as well as in the protection of the heritage of faith that forms part of the history and identity of these communities," it said.