



Medical staff attends to a rescuer at the site of a collapsed building following an earthquake, in Cali, Colombia, August 10, 2026. The Catholic bishops of Colombia are calling for national unity and urgent aid after the 7.4-magnitude earthquake struck the country, killing over 100 people and injuring hundreds. (OSV News/Reuters/Sergio Acero)

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Bogotá, Colombia — August 11, 2026

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Pope Leo XIV said he was deeply saddened by the loss of life and destruction following a powerful earthquake that struck Colombia, leaving more than 100 dead and dozens of collapsed buildings.

The pope offered prayers "for the eternal rest of the deceased and raises his prayers to the Lord for the speedy recovery of those affected by this tragedy," said a telegram to Archbishop Francisco Javier Múnera Correa of Cartagena, president of the Colombian Bishops' Conference, signed by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state.

The earthquake struck in the morning Aug. 10, with hundreds of videos posted online of people fleeing outdoors as the ground below them violently shook.

The Colombian Association of Capital Cities reported that the death toll rose to 132, with more than 570 injured. The association, which is a network of Colombia's major cities, said the number is expected to change as damage assessments continue in the affected areas.

In his message, which the Vatican published Aug. 11, Cardinal Parolin conveyed the pope's condolences "to the families who, in this hour of deep sorrow, mourn the loss of their loved ones."

"In the same way, he assures his spiritual closeness and expresses his gratitude to all those who, with generous dedication, are working in the search, rescue, and assistance efforts for those affected," the message read.

"Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, he asks the Lord to pour out upon the beloved Colombian people the gifts of spiritual strength and Christian hope," said the message.

According to Colombia's Geological Service, the quake's epicenter was the northwestern department of Chocó, and the intense magnitude made it "the strongest earthquake felt in Colombia in the last decade."

The Geological Service also reported that, as of Aug. 10 in the afternoon, the country has recorded 18 aftershocks with magnitudes between 1.4 and 4.8 since the initial earthquake.

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In a message published Aug. 10, the Colombian Bishops' Conference expressed its closeness to the victims of the deadly 7.4 magnitude quake, as well as those who have been displaced.

"We pray for those who have lost their lives, that God may grant them eternal rest; for the persons who are still missing; for the injured, and for the affected families," the bishops said.

The bishops also prayed for relief and medical personnel, as well as military and government authorities, "and all those who, with generosity and courage, are working in search, rescue, and care efforts for those affected."

"This painful moment reminds us that no one can face an emergency of this magnitude alone," the statement read. "Colombia is called, once again, to recognize itself as one family and to respond to the suffering of its brothers and sisters with generosity, responsibility, and solidarity."

Among the videos of the destruction wrought by the earthquake were that of the Cathedral Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary in Manizales, as well as several churches that were heavily damaged in the aftermath.

The Archdiocese of Manizales also shared a 10-second video showing a Mass taking place as the earthquake struck in the morning.

In a video message to the city's faithful, Archbishop José Miguel Gómez of Manizales said that while the archdiocese continues to assess the damage to churches, "the most important thing is you, the faithful, the priests, and all our neighbors who suffered the same."

"God, our Lord, never abandons us, and it is in these moments when, lifting our eyes to Him, we must all, with humility and simplicity, ask Him for the graces we need to live through these difficulties," Archbishop Gómez said.

The archbishop also invoked the intercession of Our Lady of the Rosary, asking her to "console and comfort" those affected by the natural disaster. He also urged people to follow guidelines given by the authorities.

"And, following those instructions, always seek to be attentive to those who suffer the most, so that no person is left without care in these difficult times," he said before imparting his blessing.

The Colombian bishops' conference said dioceses across the country are setting up collection points to ensure food distribution to shelters, hospitals and communities in the affected areas.

Caritas Colombia, the conference said, activated its National Emergency Service "to raise funds to directly help the jurisdictions and communities that were most affected by this tragedy."