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Pope urges aid to Haiti earthquake victims

by Wire Services



Bas-Ravine, in the northern part of Cap-Haitien.

VATICAN CITY

Pope Benedict XVI today urged generous international aid for the victims of Haiti's earthquake and has pledged concrete help from the Catholic Church.

Benedict also asked prayers for the victims and assured all those who were suffering that he was spiritually close to them. He "implored God for consolation and relief in their suffering."

Benedict said he wanted to make an appeal to the generosity of all "so that our concrete solidarity and the effective support of the international community will not be lacking for these brothers and sisters who are living a moment of need and pain."

He made the appeal during his weekly general audience Wednesday.

International efforts to help Haiti in the wake of yesterday's 7.0 magnitude earthquake are under way, with governments across the world and aid agencies mobilising search and rescue teams and aid supplies.

Although the full scale of the disaster has yet to emerge, it is clear that it will pose a huge challenge.

Haiti is the poorest country in the western hemisphere and is still struggling to recover from devastating hurricanes in 2008.

Catholic Relief Services, active in Haiti, is among the aid groups collecting donations to assist earthquake victims.

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