

Pope's condolences to victims of Joplin tornado

Sarah Delaney Catholic News Service | May. 25, 2011

VATICAN CITY -- Pope Benedict XVI sent his condolences and words of hope to the residents of Joplin, the Missouri town struck by a devastating tornado that killed at least 123 people, the Vatican said May 25.

The pope was following "with deep concern" the aftermath of the May 22 tornado that flattened much of the small town and left debris, destruction and hundreds of injured in its wake, according to a letter from Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Vatican secretary of state, addressed to Bishop James V. Johnston of Springfield-Cape Girardeau.

Pope Benedict said he was close to the people of Joplin in prayer and "conscious of the tragic loss of life and the immensity of the work of rebuilding that lies ahead," the letter said.

The pope asked God "to grant eternal rest to the departed, consolation to the grieving, and strength and hope to the homeless and the injured," the letter said.

He called on the wisdom, fortitude and perseverance of rescue workers and local authorities to get through the tragedy, the letter said.

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