



PICO National Network

Unlocking the Power of People™

PICO pastors say failure to protect families is catastrophic

Sunday, September 4, 2005

Without pulpits this Sunday PICO pastors from New Orleans and Gulf Coast ask congregations to pray for those who have lost everything and demand greater help from Washington.

PICO National Network congregations are responding to pleas from our brothers and sisters to flood Members of Congress and the President with messages that the federal government must act faster to save the lives of those still in New Orleans and protect those who have lost everything.

“The President needs to release every available resource to save our people who are dying before our eyes,” said Father Michael Jaques, Pastor, St. Peter Claver Catholic Church in New Orleans. “We are prepared to go to Washington to make sure that our voices are heard by those who have our fate in their hands.”

As a national network of faith communities PICO is overwhelmed by the catastrophic failure of the federal government to protect families from death and destruction. PICO’s one thousand congregations are doing everything we can to mobilize resources. PICO continues to hear from Louisiana that the FEMA response is woefully inadequate. We have seen families evacuated from the Superdome being dropped off at locked public buildings outside New Orleans and left to fend for themselves. People are being moved from shelter to shelter to shelter.

The president needs to call for a national mobilization to provide temporary housing, food, medical services and job assistance to the hundred thousands of refugees throughout the south. Communities bearing the brunt of sheltering families must be given the support they need to avoid falling apart themselves.

Resources need to be made available to rebuild New Orleans for all its citizens and to prevent catastrophes like this from happening in the future. PICO has heard so many stories pointing to the failure of federal officials to do all that could have been done to prevent and then respond to this catastrophe. What is homeland security if not adequately protecting families from death before and after natural disasters? If we treasure everyone's life we cannot shortchange our public health and homeland security infrastructure.

“Remember the LORD, who is great and awesome, and fight for your kin, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes.” [Nehemiah 4:14]

PICO continues to match up faith communities that are collecting money and offering shelter with those congregations and agencies that are bearing the brunt of sheltering refugees.

PICO is a national network of faith-based organizations working since 1972 to strengthen families and rebuild neighborhoods in 150 cities and 18 states. PICO helps people come together to transform their communities and hold public officials accountable to the common good. Through Louisiana Interfaiths Together (LIFT) and five local federations, PICO has worked for more than twenty years with congregations in New Orleans and across Louisiana.

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