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of Mary Immaculate

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Solidarity and Hope in the Wake of Colombia's Devastating Earthquake

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This past Monday, August 10, a massive 7.4-magnitude earthquake rocked Colombia, causing major damage across 14 departments and 357 municipalities. Although the earthquake shook the entire country, it hit hardest in Pereira, Cali, Quibdó, Manizales, and Armenia. Those cities are at the epicenter, with hundreds of buildings damaged and search and rescue teams still working continuously.

According to the official update from the National Unit for Disaster Risk Management (UNGRD), the disaster has already claimed 265 lives, left 3,449 people injured and 496 missing, with nearly 26,000 families affected. Infrastructure damage is equally severe. 11,347 residences were demolished, over 53,000 others were damaged, 140 structures were destroyed, and 1,819 schools, 179 health centers, 20 bridges, and 203 roads suffered significant structural damage. As rescue teams clear debris in areas that were nearly entirely destroyed, officials warn that these numbers will continue to rise.

Given the magnitude of the emergency, the government and local leaders acted quickly to coordinate rescue operations, extract trapped survivors, and assist families who had lost their homes or loved ones. Everyday citizens across the country have stepped up significantly, and international support has begun to pour in. Outside assistance is critical right now because logistics are in disarray, especially with utility outages and other disruptions complicating matters on the ground.

The Catholic Church in Colombia has also stepped forward as a key partner in relief operations, leveraging the church's food banks to coordinate roughly 50 tons of assistance scheduled for delivery this week. The

aid focuses on essential supplies, including non-perishable foods, canned items, hygiene products, cleaning supplies, blankets, and towels. Thankfully, the Oblate communities are safe because they are outside the disaster zone. Yet, in a spirit of solidarity, the Oblates are emphasizing the power of community by mobilizing local parishioners to channel not only financial donations but also basic necessities to the Food Banks.

Let us continue to pray for the Colombian people in this challenging moment.

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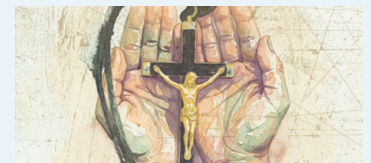
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**With heavy hearts, we honor and celebrate
the lives of the following departed Oblates:
May their souls find eternal peace,
and may their lives and devotion to service continue to inspire us all.**

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