



# Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston

Office of the Cardinal

My dear friends in Christ,

Pope Francis has urged all of us to not fall into indifference, but to become active instruments of mercy. Our Holy Father asks us to reflect on the life of Christ who is our model for corporal works of mercy. Through the Diocesan Services Fund (DSF) we are able to be instruments of mercy to thousands in our Archdiocese who are sick, poor, imprisoned, elderly or facing a crisis in their lives, such as the one caused for so many by Hurricane Harvey.

During and after this devastating storm, many of you were instruments of mercy to your neighbors, friends, and even strangers, offering comfort and compassion. I know many of you rolled up your sleeves and helped people rebuild their homes and businesses. I am proud of all of you for being God's hands to perform gestures of great love and compassion. Supported by DSF, Catholic Charities served as the Archdiocese's major disaster response organization, serving more than 15,000 people in the immediate aftermath of the storm. They are still at work offering long-term recovery services. San José Clinic, also supported by DSF, provided medical care to over 1,800 people.

The day-to-day operations of DSF also need our support, and a few of the programs highlighted this year are Pro-Life Activities, Apostleship of the Sea and the Office of Vocations. Many of you may not be familiar with the mission of the Apostleship of the Sea, but it has been a vital ministry of our Archdiocese for more than a half century. Some 300,000 seafarers come into the Port of Houston each year and 60% are Catholic. They bring 80% of our goods that we consume into our city. Offering the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion along with pastoral counseling and compassionate support for those who often spend months at a time at sea, often more than two months, is part of our responsibility to welcome the stranger.

The mission of Pro-Life Activities is to protect the most vulnerable among us, recognizing the dignity of each human person from the unborn child, to the elderly at the end of their lives, to the prisoner on death row. Human life above all belongs to God and we should make every effort to defend it. This Office is offering a new program scheduled to launch this year, called Jerome's Hope, which will assist parents who have received a difficult pregnancy diagnosis or who have lost a baby and need counseling and pastoral direction. It is because of your DSF contributions that we are able to respond to needs like these and compassionately help those who are searching for answers, healing and hope.

When he was Pope, Saint John Paul II, wrote a document called *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (in English *I Will Give You Shepherds*). This message helped to shape programs for priestly formation and vocational discernment. Our local Office of Vocations fulfills part of this important vision of increasing the number of men who are discerning to be our future shepherds. Through the celebration of the sacraments and pastoral ministry, these fishers of men become instruments of mercy for all of us.

I thank you for your gracious commitment to the DSF. With gratitude to God for your faithful discipleship and praying for God's abundant blessing upon you, I am

Your faithful Shepherd,

*+Daniel Cardinal DiNardo*

Daniel Cardinal DiNardo  
Archbishop of Galveston-Houston