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AMERICA/HAITI - Pope's appeal for the hurricane: 51 deaths in Haiti and devastation in the Caribbean

Port au Prince (Agenzia Fides) - Haiti is slowly starting to find some 'normality after the devastation caused by hurricane "Sandy", which according to the latest official report has killed at least 51 people and 15 are missing, as well as the countless damage to agriculture, roads and bridges, and aqueducts. The latest report from the Civil Protection informs that 16 people were injured, and 17,187 people remain in shelters, mainly in the south and west of Haiti.

Yesterday, on Sunday, October 28, at the end of the Angelus prayer, the Holy Father made this appeal to the affected populations in the Caribbean islands: "In recent days, a devastating hurricane struck Cuba, Haiti, Jamaica and the Bahamas, causing several deaths and enormous damage, forcing many people to leave their homes. I wish to assure you of my closeness and my recollection of those who have been affected by this natural disaster, while I invite everyone to prayer and solidarity, in order to alleviate the pain of the families of the victims and offer support to thousands of people who have been hurt in various ways by the storm. "

On Friday, October 26, the Bishops of the eastern region of Cuba had gone in person to the provinces of Santiago de Cuba, Holguín and Guantánamo to check the damage and give pastoral assistance to the population. Santiago de Cuba was isolated even in communications, because the storm damaged the electricity and telephone networks. The note sent to Fides Agency reported statements by Manolo Martinez, director of Caritas of the Diocese of Holguín, according to which in each affected area of the province there are emergency teams, and each parish is doing an analysis of the situation, while, with its own means, is trying to help the most needy people.

Local sources of information have reported, moreover, that the Haitian Prime Minister, Laurent Lamothe, made a reconnaissance flight over the affected areas, in order to assess the extent of the flooding and other damage. The teams of national and international experts are working to draw up sectoral evaluations, according to information from the civil protection. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 29/10/2012)

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