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Arlington County Sheriff's Sgt. Jose Quiroz prays with his family during the Blue Mass at the Cathedral of St. Thomas More Sept. 16. (Joe Cashwell/The Catholic Herald)



by Dan Morris-Young

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**Editor's note:** *The Field Hospital blog reports on parish and other grassroots efforts across the U.S. and Canada to accompany those on the margins. Pope Francis said he sees the church as a "field hospital" that labors "from the ground up" to "heal wounds."*

[Fr. Jim Sichko](#), a priest of the Diocese of Lexington, Kentucky, and a native of Orange, Texas, arranged for substantial supplies and aid to be distributed through [St. Mary Parish](#) in Orange in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey.

Also in the Harvey-hit Beaumont Diocese, [St. Catherine of Siena Catholic School](#) in Port Arthur, Texas, has expressed deep appreciation for the help it received from [St. Joseph School](#) in Plaquemine, Louisiana, [Ascension Catholic Diocesan Regional School](#) in Donaldsonville, Louisiana; and from [Sagebrush Community Church](#) in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Individuals, parishes, and other organizations in Southern California [have mobilized to aid victims](#) of the earthquakes that rocked Mexico.

Among national Catholic organizations actively addressing relief efforts in Mexico following that nation's two recent, deadly earthquakes and multiple hurricanes are [Catholic Extension](#), [Catholic Relief Services](#) and the [Knights of Columbus](#).

[Catholic Charities USA](#) is also spearheading domestic hurricane relief efforts.

[According to its website](#), the Knights of Columbus was one of the first organizations to provide financial support to families of fallen first responders following the terrorist attacks on the United States on Sept. 11, 2001. In keeping with that history, the Knights' Columbian Squires Circle 5700 based at [St. John the Baptist Parish](#) in Hot Springs, Arkansas, organized [a Sept. 11 interfaith prayer service](#) to honor those lost firefighters, police, EMTs and others. Held at [St. Mary of The Springs Parish](#) in Hot Springs, the 6-9 a.m. event drew about 300. Breakfast was included. [The Columbian Squires program](#) is for 10-to-18-year-old males.



Fire Department Chief Ed Davis of Hot Springs, Arkansas, explains the significance of ringing a firehouse bell, a tradition for firefighters who have died. Davis rang the bell during an interfaith prayer service at Hot Springs' St. Mary Parish in remembrance of first responders who died in New York City on Sept. 11, 2001. (Courtesy of Arkansas Catholic/Aprille Hanson)

The Hot Springs' Catholic community has also banded together to support St. Andrew's Church in Colladere, Haiti. Current projects include ongoing needs of the school and its teachers; providing electricity; reforestation; and a Heifer project. The group works with [Feed My Starving Children](#) to support nutrition at St. Andrew's.

In another parish-twinning report, [St. Joseph Parish](#) in Vancouver, Washington, [recently renewed](#) a three-year covenant with St. Bernadette Parish in [Samoya, Kenya](#). Among other things, the Vancouver group has helped build a church that holds 1,200 worshippers and provided student scholarships. According to Northwest Catholic, "since 2014, the two parishes have promised to support each other spiritually, culturally and economically,"

The courage and faith of first responders [was also praised Sept. 16](#) at the annual Blue Mass at the [Cathedral of St. Thomas More](#) in Arlington, Virginia. Arlington Bishop Michael Burbidge was main celebrant.

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Although Blue Masses have taken on a higher profile in the wake of 9/11, [the celebration](#) dates to Sept. 29, 1934, when Fr. Thomas Dade initiated the service as part of his work with the Catholic Police and Firemen's Society. The first Mass was held at in [St. Patrick's Catholic Church](#) in Washington, D.C. The date was chosen to coincide with [Michaelmas](#), the feast of [St. Michael the Archangel](#), the [patron saint](#) of police officers. St. Patrick's will celebrate its annual Catholic Police and Fire Society liturgy on Oct. 10 shortly after noon.

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