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The Pope prays for the Hurricane victims

After praying the Angelus with the faithful in Castelgandolfo, Benedict XVI expressed his sorrow over the catastrophe which struck the city of New Orleans, and the one in Baghdad which took hundreds of lives last Wednesday due to sudden panic in a religious procession.

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In Castelgandolfo this past Sunday, the Holy Father assured those present for the mid-day Angelus that he is praying for the hurricane victims in the United States, as well as for their families, the wounded and infirm, children and the elderly, and for all those left homeless.

He also gave his blessing to "those who are devoting themselves to the difficult task of aid and reconstruction," and indicated that he has sent Archbishop Paul Joseph Cordes, president of the Pontifical Council "Cor Unum," to bring "the testimony" of his solidarity to everyone affected.

"I am also thinking," he concluded, "of the hundreds of Iraqis who met their death last Wednesday--most of them older persons, women, and children--in the sudden panic that disrupted a religious procession in Baghdad. May the Almighty touch

the hearts of everyone so that a climate of reconciliation and mutual trust might finally be established in that tormented land."

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