

Earthquake devastates Costa Rica

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica (CNS) — Costa Rican parishes and the Catholic emergency relief system mobilized to help victims of Costa Rica's third and most devastating earthquake in the past year begin putting their lives back together.

The head of Caritas in the San Jose archdiocese, located in the national capital, said a growing fear of epidemic has begun in addition to the death and destruction caused by the April 22 earthquake on the Caribbean coast.

"There's great worry that cholera will arrive from South America due to lack of potable water and that will result in a greater catastrophe than the earthquake," said Father Francisco Hernandez Rojas in a telephone interview with Catholic News Service April 24.

Cholera, which has been spreading throughout South America, apparently started in poverty-stricken areas of Peru.

In Panama, a local government official in the town of Changuinola, the hardest hit area in that country, said buildings there had been leveled and at least 70 people were injured.

The quake caused severe flooding on Panama's Bocas del Toro Island, destroying about 50 houses, radio reports said.

Caritas is working with parishes in the disaster zone, which have mobilized catechists and youth group members to teach earthquake victims to provide themselves



As she is consoled by Cecilia Sanchez (right), Cecilia De Foliano covers her face in distress while rescue workers dig through the rubble of the International Hotel in the coastal town of Puerto Limon, Costa Rica, on April 24. De Foliano's brother, Juan Antonio, was buried during the April 22 earthquake in which 79 people died and more than 800 were injured.

with safe drinking water, he said. The teams are also distributing food and medicine and trying to provide moral support.

The quake struck in territory covered by the Apostolic Vicariate of Limon.

Most of the victims are small farm operators, Father Hernandez said.

"On the human level, people are very frightened and nervous," he said. "They are poor people who have lost everything. For them their houses were their security — what they had worked for all their lives."

He said at least 100 homes were destroyed.

Father Hernandez said there had been two previous quakes in Costa Rica in the past year — neither, however, of the magnitude of the latest one, which killed at least 50 in Costa Rica and 29 in neighbor-

ing Panama. More than 800 people were reported injured.

The quake measured 7.2 on the open-ended Richter scale. By comparison, the earthquake which rocked northern California on Oct. 4, 1989, killing 61, measured 7.1.

Pope John Paul II expressed condolences for the disaster in separate telegrams to the heads of the Panamanian and Costa Rican bishops' conferences. The cables were sent on the pope's behalf by Archbishop Angelo Sodano, head of the Vatican Secretariat of State.

Strong aftershocks continued to rock Costa Rica April 23.

The worst hit area was Limon — the country's main port, a tourist city of 50,000.

"It was the worse thing we've ever been through, it was terrible, terrible," Red Cross worker Rosara Gibson was quoted as saying.

The hospitals in Matina and Limon, which has the largest medical center on the coast, were evacuated because of quake-related damage.

Costa Rican, U.S. and Nicaraguan aircraft were evacuating the injured from the zone, Father Hernandez said.

Contributing to this story was Laurie Hansen in Washington.

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Vatican releasing social encyclical today

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope John Paul II's latest encyclical, a major treatise on social and economic issues, is scheduled for publication May 2, the Vatican said.

The document, entitled *Centesimus Annus* (The Hundredth Year), commemorates the centenary of *Rerum Novarum* (on capital and labor), the landmark social encyclical written by Pope Leo XIII.

The pope announced in January that he was working on the encyclical, and declared 1991 as "the year of the social teaching of the church." He has asked Catholics to study, develop and spread the church's social doctrine.

Considered the starting point of modern social teaching by the popes, *Rerum Novarum* responded to the late-19th century challenge of economic justice — especially in labor-management relations — and also to the rising influence of socialism.

The pope's new document was expected to explore current economic and social problems, while stressing the moral dimension in finding solutions.

EDITORS' NOTE: The Catholic Courier edition of May 9 will contain full coverage of the new encyclical.

Right to Life president decides to leave position after 10 years

By Nancy Frazier O'Brien
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Dr. John C. Willke has decided not to run in June for another term as president of the National Right to Life Committee, a post he has held for 10 of the past 11 years.

Willke, a retired physician from Cincinnati, said he would devote more time to his radio show, "Pro-Life Perspective," and to other educational work in the pro-life field. He also was expected to continue as president of the International Right to Life Federation, a group he helped establish in 1985.

His successor will be elected by the organization's board of directors at a board meeting before the National Right to Life Committee's June 6-8 convention in Atlanta.

Willke was traveling in Japan in late April and was not available for comment regarding his decision, according to a spokeswoman for National Right to Life.

But in a letter to the board published in the April 23 *National Right to Life News*, he said his radio program and other media interviews and writings have "resulted in my becoming, in many ways, a spokesperson for the entire pro-life movement, extending beyond the confines of National Right to Life and assuming a certain overarching national and international position."

"This unsought-for happening has carried with it a deep responsibility and has simply restructured my entire life," he said.

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