



**Our Lady of Prompt Succor Nursing Home**  
**C'est la Vie Apartments**  
**Newsletter ~ June 2021**  
**A Ministry of the Marianites of Holy Cross**

### **Hurricanes and Their Effects**

As we enter into the 2021 hurricane season, there are areas of our State which are still recovering from the storms of 2020. Named after the ancient indigenous god *Hurican* (the Carib god of evil), hurricanes are giant energy powerhouses. They are an intense low-pressure tropical weather system of organized, swirling clouds and thunderstorms that gain energy from warm tropical waters.

While we are using the term hurricane here, these systems are actually identical to typhoons or cyclones—with the name depending on where they occur. They are called hurricanes in the Atlantic and in the central and eastern Pacific, typhoons in the northwestern Pacific, and cyclones in the Indian Ocean and South Pacific. To be classified as a hurricane, wind speeds must reach 74 miles per hour (mph) and that wind speed is powerful enough to peel off roof shingles.

When hurricanes make landfall, they bring a *trifecta* of threats – pounding rain, raging winds, and devastating storm surge. As we well know, these threats are capable of leveling communities and destroying lives and livelihoods.

Meteorologists measure a hurricane's strength based on the intensity of their sustained wind speeds and rate them using the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale. There are five categories of hurricane: a category 1 produces sustained winds of at least 74 mph, a category 2 storm begins at 96 mph, and a category 3—considered “major”—has winds of at least 111 mph. Categories 4 and 5—both considered “catastrophic”—generate winds of at least 130 mph and 157 mph, respectively.

However, the category of a hurricane reflects only the wind speed, not the overall potential for damage. In fact, the greatest risk comes from flooding associated with the storm surge or the intense rains the storms generate. Consider Superstorm Sandy, which arrived in New Jersey with 80 mph winds (barely over the category 1 minimum) but still proved devastating. Sandy lacked the extreme winds of a major storm, but the massive swell of water it generated slammed into New Jersey and New York, obliterating beaches and boardwalks, filling subway tunnels, inundating neighborhoods, and destroying massive amounts of infrastructure. Similarly, most of the damage caused by hurricanes Harvey and Florence were largely attributable to torrential rains, not wind or even storm surge in coastal areas.

Ravaged homes and local communities are the images most often seen on the news after a hurricane strikes, but ecosystems—both on land and at sea—experience their own forms of devastation as well. This environmental destruction also affects our ability to live healthily in our surroundings.

**Saltwater/freshwater intrusion** – When seawater surges into wetlands, bays, and estuaries, the onslaught of salt can harm freshwater marsh grasses and plants as well as crabs, minnows, and other marine life. When saltwater washes over land, it can harm or even kill bottomland forests and coastal trees unaccustomed to the increase in salinity. The opposite can happen, as well: heavy rains can cause freshwater to flood into coastal basins, decreasing the salinity of typically brackish waters and imperiling the species that depend on them.

**Dislocation of species** – Both strong winds and the relative calm of a hurricane’s eye (which acts as a natural cage) can push birds, particularly seabirds and water fowl, hundreds of miles from home. Meanwhile, flood-waters—from both storm surge and overflowing rivers and streams—can strand animals far from their natural territory.

**Destruction of forests** – Hurricane-force winds can uproot trees and bushes or strip them of their leaves, seeds, fruit, berries, and branches, damaging entire wooded ecosystems. This can not only create short-term food shortages for species, but also change the face of an entire area. Once a forest canopy is damaged, a once cool, damp, and shady area may become a sun-filled, hot, and dry space—effectively creating new habitat for some invasive species while destroying ideal conditions for other, longer-term inhabitants.

**Loss of wetlands and dunes, and beach erosion** – Storm surge, waves, and winds can destroy wetlands and erode dunes and beaches, which provide critical habitat and important nesting grounds for a wide variety of wildlife species. These areas provide a first line of defense from storm surge for us humans as well. Wetlands alone prevented an estimated additional \$625 million in flood damage to East Coast communities during Hurricane Sandy.

**Development of muddy and murky waters** – Heavy rainfall and flooding can wash everything from soil and sediment to nutrient pollution to hazardous waste from wastewater treatment plants, refineries, and Superfund sites into marine, coastal, and freshwater environments. The introduction of mud and debris can suffocate marine life, such as oysters, and damage grasses and agriculture; poisonous contaminants can accumulate in fish and shellfish (and then be eaten by us); and nutrient pollution can contribute to coral bleaching.

Hurricane damage to people, places, and the environment is often devastating. Even with good preparation, the trauma of experiencing a natural disaster can be overwhelming. As global warming increases and ocean temperatures increase, the strength of hurricanes also seems to be increasing. To impact the force and frequency of hurricanes, the issues related to increased warming of the earth need to be addressed consistently and aggressively. As we are continually faced with the forces of nature, the underlying forces of human nature also need to be faced.

### ☞ Celebrating Birthdays in June ☞

<i>Sr. J. DeLoach</i>	<i>6/03</i>	<i>J. Lafleur</i>	<i>6/15</i>	<i>M. Myers</i>	<i>6/20</i>
<i>M. Johnson</i>	<i>6/05</i>	<i>B. Marks</i>	<i>6/06</i>	<i>J. Roth</i>	<i>6/29</i>
				<i>N. Stelly</i>	<i>6/27</i>

### † Recently Deceased Residents †

*Honorine Roger*      *5/5/2021*

### June 20<sup>th</sup> – Father’s Day

#### Prayer for Fathers –

*Dear Heavenly Father we entrust into your loving hands all those we call “father:”  
We pray for fathers who strive to be a faithful and wise presence in their families; for fathers who keep vigil at the bedside of a sick child; for fathers who search for a lost child; for fathers far away from family and friends; for fathers in the military; for fathers who search for employment; for fathers who are in danger; for fathers who are homeless; for fathers who are in prison; for all those men who yearn to be a father and have no children; for our fathers who have died and who we continue to hold close in our hearts. Lord, please hold each one in the palm of Your hand. Amen.*

***Happy Father’s Day to all our DADS!***

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