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## **Statement of Most Rev. Samuel J. Aquila, Bishop of Fargo**

*March 22, 2009*

To the faithful of the Diocese of Fargo and to all people of good will, as we face the potential for serious flooding in several locations in the Diocese of Fargo, be assured of my prayers for each and every one of you. Through communication with flood authorities and contact with the many Catholic parishes in the areas of concern, I am working to stay informed of the needs of individuals and communities throughout the Diocese.

During this time we must first turn in prayer to God that He will protect our families, our homes, and our communities. Prayer to the Holy Spirit for the gifts of wisdom and counsel is essential too in the decisions that will need to be made in the days ahead. I ask especially those in the diocese who live outside of the affected areas to increase your prayer, praying that those in the center of the flood fight will be protected and may experience the peace only God's love can give.

I am grateful for our young people -- youth group members and high school and college students -- who are embracing this opportunity to help with sandbagging those communities and homes which are threatened; the parishes and diocesan entities like Catholic Charities North Dakota who are establishing ways to meet the unique needs of people now and after this threat subsides; and the individuals who are doing small things, like providing food or offering childcare, that make a tremendous difference for those laboring to save their homes. The Fargo Catholic Schools Network has set up a Flood Fight Update e-mail system which puts out calls for assistance with sand bagging every few hours. For more information, contact Shanley High School. Your work is prayer in action, prayer which offers hope and assurance during this struggle.

For all who are suffering due to the potential flood, I pray for God's protection and blessing over you and for the calming strength of His grace. As in any adversity, with faith, hope and charity, God will grant us the particular graces we need in this trial and we will grow in our love for God and each other.