



SAINT JOSEPH ABBEY + SEMINARY COLLEGE

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Flood Recovery Information for Friends and Supporters

Updated as of 3:45 PM, April 6th, 2016

UPDATE #1

On March 11, 2016, floodwaters from the Bogue Falaya River inundated St. Joseph Abbey + Seminary College with nearly two feet of water. The impact of the flood far surpasses damages suffered in Hurricane Katrina—especially in light of record enrollment in the seminary. Over 100 crew members are working around the clock on the first stage of recovery.

It will take many weeks to fully assess the cost of cleanup and repair. The information below is provided so that you can make informed decisions regarding support of our reconstruction efforts. This document summarizes “what we currently know”, and will be updated and shared as more information becomes available.

How extensive was the damage?

Thirty-one buildings and structures suffered varying degrees of damage, including Seminary College classrooms, residence halls, the library, gym, dining hall and kitchen. Other apostolates affected were the Pennies for Bread bakery, Abbey Woodworks, and the retreat center. Floodwaters also damaged our historic buildings, including the basement of the chapel, damaging electrical and air conditioning systems crucial for maintaining the integrity of the chapel’s magnificent murals by artist Dom Gregory de Wit. Thankfully, water did not reach the main floor of our worship space.

In addition to damaged buildings, there is the cost of cleaning or replacing furniture, fixtures and equipment. Finally, infrastructure such as the bridge, roads and electrical systems are being assessed for damage.

What is the estimated cost for cleanup and repair?

We don’t yet know the full cost. Flood recovery has three distinct phases: Clean Up, Remediation, and Mitigation/Renovation. At present, it is safe to assume that total recovery will exceed \$30 million.

Will any of the costs be covered by insurance or FEMA?

Like most hazard insurance, ours did not cover flooding. Since the flood has been Presidentially declared (FEMA-4263-DR-LA), FEMA is providing assistance through the Public Assistance Grant Program. Saint Joseph Seminary College is a private non-profit educational institution, and therefore eligible to apply for federal assistance. The process to apply for FEMA assistance has just begun, and will take months to negotiate with the State of Louisiana and FEMA. The FEMA programs are cost reimbursable, and will only fund *up to 75%* of the *eligible* emergency and restoration costs. As of April 5, 2016, FEMA has only approved *emergency clean up and stabilization, and not restoration*.

How much has been raised so far for recovery efforts?

Through April 4, 2016, we have gratefully received a total of \$426,000 for recovery efforts.

May I make a donation to fund a particular need?

Yes. At the moment, however, unrestricted gifts to be used “where the need is greatest” give us the most flexibility. Looking ahead to May, it is obvious that we will quickly need to launch a multi-million dollar capital campaign. Should you wish to consider a major gift to fund particular needs, we welcome the opportunity to visit. Contact Leslie Tate, Director of Development at (985) 867 - 2235 or ltate@sjasc.edu.

Will there be naming opportunities available?

Yes. We will publish a list of naming opportunities once the full scope of work is known. In the meantime, we welcome the opportunity to visit should you feel called to fund a particular area.

Do you have a list of building, equipment, and/or areas in need of specific funding?

We are developing a list summarizing the damage to each building, its furniture and contents, along with estimated costs for full recovery. We invite prospective major gift donors to contact us should you wish to inquire about specific areas you might like to fund. We will make best efforts to secure the latest information in your area of interest.

I would like to help with fundraising efforts. Who should I contact?

Contact Leslie Tate, Director of Development at (985) 867 – 2235 or ltate@sjasc.edu.

What happens if a significant amount is raised, only to later discover that the need was actually less than first thought?

It will take several months to prepare a FEMA claim, and longer still before FEMA makes a decision regarding our eligibility for government aid. In setting a campaign goal, it would be helpful to first have a decision from FEMA—but we don’t have the luxury of time. Given the extent of the damage, and our need for working capital, time is of-the-essence in launching a campaign with the best information *currently* available. Regarding FEMA, we need to “hope for the best” even as we launch a campaign that “prepares for the worst.”

In the unlikely event that FEMA reimbursements dramatically lower our overall recovery costs, and donations surpass recovery needs, funds will be earmarked for the continued refurbishment of buildings and grounds as outlined in our master plan, with special emphasis on issues that address our growing seminarian enrollment.

Is there anything else I can do to help?

Let us begin with prayers of gratitude that no one was hurt. Then pray for perseverance and patience for the monks, faculty, staff, and record number of seminarians who will long remember the flood of March 2016.