

## Church Evacuation Overview

With the recent catastrophic earthquakes in Chile, Haiti, and Baja Mexico, along with the numerous minor 'shakers' here in Southern California, your parish felt we should provide some verbal instruction on what to do in case of an earthquake during a Mass.

The parish, during its many renovation projects, has worked hard to make our church, and all our buildings, as safe as possible. A few examples are: the church's large new lighting fixtures are soundly bolted to support structures in the ceiling, the stain glass windows are behind a protective plexi-glass, and objects on walls are fastened to studs. All our gas mains have seismic shut off valves. We have first aid and natural disaster supplies in each building. We have posted evacuation diagrams at all ministry buildings.

All these measures will help. However, if we experience an earthquake of a large magnitude, we need to be ready to help ourselves and each other.

### Step One:

Familiarize yourself with the exits closest to you. Remember; its not necessarily the one you entered. (You should make this a habit for any building you find yourself in.) The church has the main front entry doors, and the four side doors.

### Step Two:

In case of an earthquake; drop and cover. Do your best to keep your body below the backs of the solid wood pews. The pews will provide some protection if any objects fall from the ceiling. Protect the back of your head with your hands. Use the hymnals, purse or sweater to provide additional protection to your most vulnerable area; your head and neck. Remain calm and remain quiet.

### Step Three:

Once the shaking stops; do not run outside. Again, remain calm and remain quiet. Listen for the usher's instructions to exit the church and proceed to the evacuation areas. The evacuation areas are the grass areas. They are up front on either side of the church on Jackson Avenue.

Those exiting on Joseph's side are to proceed to the grass field. It is important that everyone exit slowly, helping children, elderly and handicapped persons in this procession. Again, our ushers will be instructing you and helping you.

We wish to have everyone up off the parking lot, safe on the grass areas, so emergency vehicles can arrive. (This will help keep individuals safe from those who will disregard instructions and speed out of the parking lot in a rush to get home.) \*Please, do not do this. Do not rush to your cars and try to leave immediately! During those first 10-15 minutes after an earthquake, there will be too many parishioners moving about the parking lot.

### Step Four:

Once emergency vehicles arrive, or the emergency is over, everyone may start to return to their vehicles and leave the parking lot in a slow and careful manner.

## *Is Your Family Prepared For A Natural Disaster? - Maureen Schultz*

There is a fundamental problem with emergencies. They are unpredictable. Would you know what to do in case of a residential fire, earthquake, wildfire, flood, or other disaster? In a recent American Red Cross survey, 67% responded that it is very important to be prepared for a disaster, while only 22% actually are.

Need to be better prepared? Most of us do. Start today! Your first step is to make a plan. Discuss, with your entire family, what types of emergencies might occur. House fires are the most common, so be sure you have a practiced evacuation plan ready. In California an earthquake is very likely. Plan to be self sufficient for at least three days. Every member of your family should have an Emergency Contact Information Card. Print one up and have in eve-

ryone's wallet. EMT's and emergency room/hospital staff do look for this type of information in wallets and cell phones when an individual is injured. They need to know who you would want contacted.

If a disaster displaces your family, have a plan where you will go. (Friends, relatives, hotel? Do you have a pet that needs housing too?) What will you need to have with you? (Clothes, medications, medical insurance cards, copies of homeowner's insurance, etc.) Make sure that your car is never below a half tank of gas.

You need one local number and one out of state contact phone number. Make sure everyone in your family knows how to contact these two numbers. Practice what information to leave with these contact persons: name, location, health status/

injury, how long can you stay at your current location, and time you will call back, (ie: daily before noon.) until all family members are reunited.

Pack your Emergency Kit! Don't put it off any longer! Basic supplies for an emergency kit are:

**Water:** 1 gallon per person per day, for drinking and sanitation.

**Food:** At least a 3 day supply of non-perishable food. Remember your pets.

**Battery Powered Radio:** With extra batteries.

**Flashlight:** With extra batteries.

**First Aid Kit:** Large enough for supplies for all family members.

**Whistle:** To signal for help.

**Dust Mask:** Or cotton t-shirt, to help filter the air.

**Moist Towelettes:** For sanitation.

**Wrench & Pliers:** To turn off utilities.

**Can Opener:** To open canned foods.

**Plastic Sheeting and Duct Tape:** To construct shelter, etc.

**Garbage Bags:** For personal sanitation.

**Blankets and Clothing.**

**Remember specialty items:** medications, glasses, diapers, formula, etc. Pack 'comfort' items for small children.

**Remember to add cash to your kit.** Small denominations are best.

**Also have a copy of your home & medical insurance information in your kit too.**

Be sure to have a home inventory list, that is updated annually. A home video is a great addition to this listing.

Check these sources for more information:

[www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

[www.fema.gov/](http://www.fema.gov/)

[areyouready](http://areyouready)

[www.redcross.org/](http://www.redcross.org/)

[prepare](http://prepare)