



BYZANTINE CATHOLIC  
METROPOLITAN ARCHEPARCHY OF PITTSBURGH

❖ OFFICE OF THE METROPOLITAN ARCHBISHOP ❖

66 Riverview Avenue ♦ Pittsburgh PA 15214  
(412) 231-4000 ♦ Fax (412) 231-1697

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**STATEMENT AND APPEAL OF METROPOLITAN BASIL  
FOR SUPPORT OF VICTIMS OF TSUNAMI**

“As we continue to hear news of the worst natural disaster in modern times, our prayers and thoughts are with the survivors and the families of the victims. The whole world is numb as we come to understand the human tragedy in the countries of Sri Lanka, India, Indonesia, Thailand, Bangladesh, Burma and Malaysia caused by the tsunami in the Indian Ocean Basin.

“It is painful to observe the peoples of these countries who already know more than their share of poverty and who now must endure even greater suffering. Of particular distress is that over a third of the victims found so far have been children, and many children who have survived must do so now without parents and family members.

“Our brothers and sisters of various Eastern Churches live in this area of the world and many have suffered tremendous losses. Also, some members of the families of the parishes of our Archeparchy live and work in the affected countries. They need our help.

“The faithful of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, joining with the whole world, are desirous to offer assistance to the victims of this disaster - assistance that is greatly needed. St. John Chrysostom encourages us by saying that ‘feeding the hungry is a greater work than raising the dead.’

“We appeal to all our parishes and institutions to take a collection during the Divine Liturgies on the weekend of January 15-16 for those in need. These funds will then be dispersed through the office of the Archbishop. Confident that our clergy, religious and laity will be most generous in response to this appeal, we thank all who participate in any manner.”