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Caritas Nepal, led by Sr. Cecilia Shrestha, extends help to those affected by the recent flash flood. (Courtesy of Caritas Nepal)



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Monday Starter

With the death toll mounting to more than 1,000 and with more than 4,500 missing, the executive director of Caritas Nepal is warning that the disaster caused by massive flooding in the country on Aug. 26 has not fully played out and will require international support for months to come.

"The situation remains extremely alarming, and the number of casualties continues to rise as search and rescue operations are still ongoing," Sr. Cecilia Durga Shrestha, a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny and head of Caritas Nepal since 2023, said of Nepal government search, rescue and relief efforts.

"Thousands of people have been affected, with many lives lost, people still missing, and significant damage to homes, roads, bridges, livelihoods and other essential infrastructure," Shrestha told GSR, speaking specifically of the flooding that swept through communities in Nuwakot near the Himalayan nation's border with China.



Sr. Cecilia Durga Shrestha, a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny, has been serving as executive director of Caritas Nepal since 2023. (Courtesy of Caritas Nepal)

Shrestha said that since the second day of the disaster, Caritas Nepal and its partners have been on the ground accompanying affected communities.

"We are providing food and non-food items, essential household utensils, and other emergency supplies," Shrestha said. "We are also supporting people who have lost family members with essential items needed for mourning and funeral rituals, as well as providing medical kits to affected communities in different locations."

However, at present, the most urgent needs include temporary shelter, debris clearance, essential household items, temporary learning centers for children, psychosocial counseling, medical assistance and support to restore basic livelihoods

and services.

Shrestha stressed the need for the international community to continue accompanying affected communities in the coming months. "Financial support would be particularly valuable to enable us to respond to both immediate humanitarian needs and the longer-term recovery and rebuilding of affected families and communities," she said.

Nepal has a population of 31 million and is predominantly Hindu, with only about 10,000 Roman Catholics. But Caritas' response, Shrestha said, is to extend a "helping hand to the affected people from the ground," regardless of religious affiliation.

[Related: Nepal floods leave 'nothing' behind as Catholic nuns mobilize aid](#)

Loyola University honors the late Sr. Jean Schmidt with campus statue

Loyola University Chicago has honored one of its icons, the late [Sr. Jean Dolores Schmidt](#) — longtime Loyola Ramblers basketball fan, team chaplain and campus fixture — with a statue on the university's Rogers Park campus.

The Aug. 21 unveiling of the cast bronze statue, which depicts Schmidt sitting on a bench and holding a Loyola basketball, fell on what would have been the beloved sister's 107th birthday and a little less than a year since [Schmidt's death](#) at age 106 on Oct. 9, 2025.

Known to all as Sister Jean, Schmidt received international attention and acclaim during the Loyola Ramblers' appearance during the 2018 NCAA March Madness tournament, the year she served as the team's chaplain at age 98.



Tom Hitcho, Loyola senior associate athletics director and longtime friend of Sr. Jean Schmidt, was the first to sit next to the statue after it was unveiled Aug. 21, 2026, at Loyola University Chicago. (Courtesy of Loyola University Chicago)

But during the statue unveiling ceremony, university officials and members of her congregation, the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, praised Schmidt for being more than a dedicated basketball fan.

"Sister Jean's ministry of presence was a gift to generations of Ramblers," said Loyola President Mark Reed, who praised Schmidt's compassion, joy and concern and care for students and staff.

In her remarks, Sr. LaDonna Manternach, president of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, recalled Schmidt's love of Loyola students.

"A good listener, she inspired many to pursue their dreams with purpose. Her deep trust in God guided her life and encouraged others to trust their own journey. "

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Manternach added: "With this statue on Loyola's campus, may she continue to watch generations of students come and go, and may they live their dreams with intention, purpose and trust in God."

The statue was created by Littleton Alston, a renowned sculptor who teaches at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. "I hope my sculpture creates something of Sister Jean's spirit, and that I evoke memories of her for the people who know her and love her, and for the many future students and admirers that will come to this very campus to see her," Alston said.

Adrian Dominicans criticize Trump's trade war with Canada

A sister congregation in the state of Michigan, which borders Canada, has criticized the Trump administration for its imposition of steep tariffs against the U.S neighbor, calling them an "appalling breach of our longstanding and honored bonds of friendship" with Canada.

In a [statement](#) issued Aug. 26, the general council of the Adrian Dominican Sisters and Associates said, "The imposition of tariffs represents a shocking declaration of economic war against one of our nation's most reliable friends and allies — a trade and global security partner and a dear neighbor whose residents are our family and friends.

"We are appalled — and ashamed — by this egregious and dangerous abuse of power."

The Dominican Sisters of Adrian, Michigan, is a congregation with about 300 vowed women religious and 180 associates.