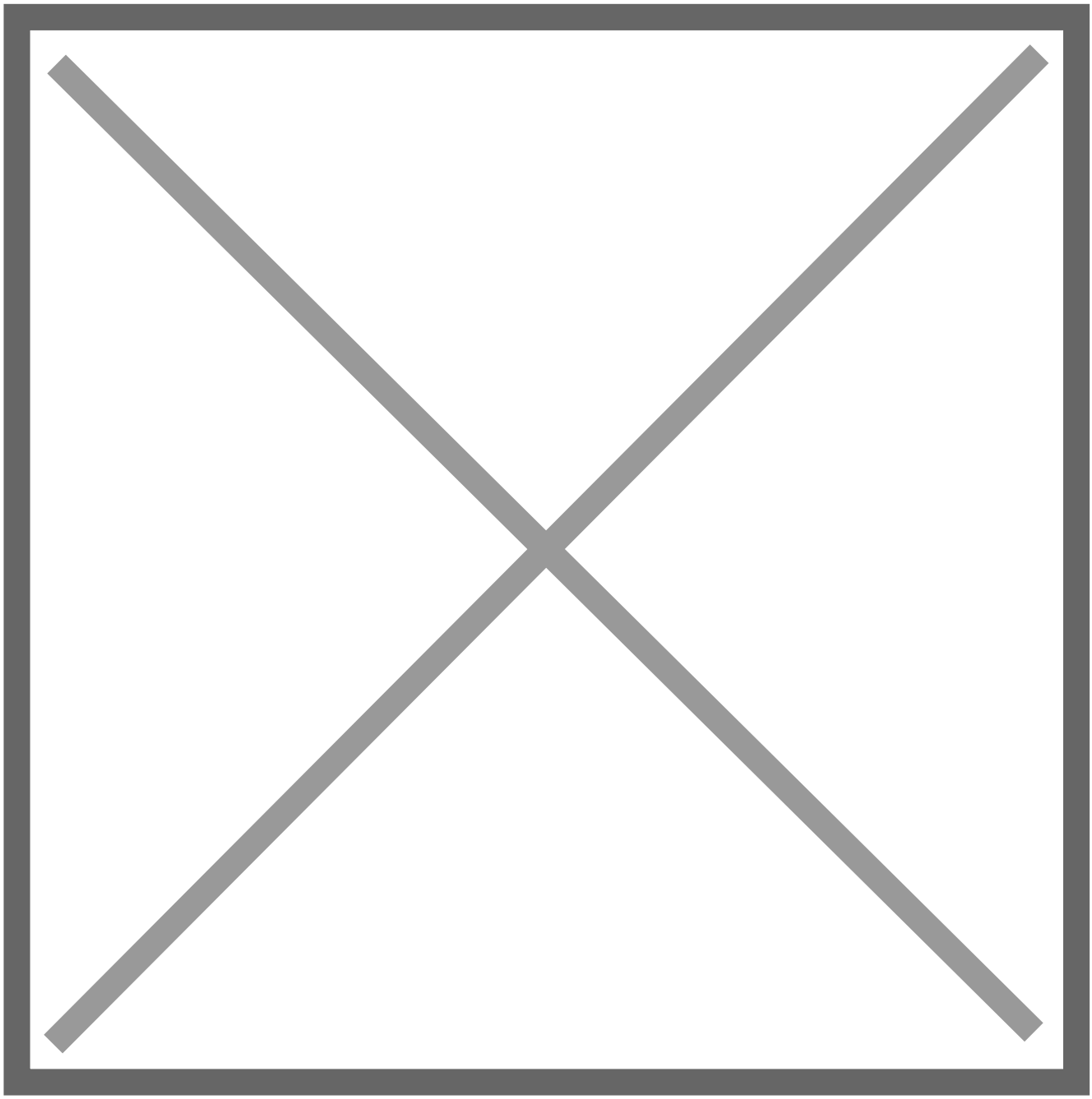
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People transport an undamaged statue of the Mary and the Christ Child near the site of a damaged building in Caracas, Venezuela, June 25, 2026, following 7.2 and 7.5 magnitude earthquakes that rocked the country June 24. The death toll reached at least 1,450 and thousands more were injured, Venezuelan government officials reported June 28. Rescuers from around the world have arrived in the country to

assist in rescue efforts. (OSV News/Reuters/Fausto Torrealba)

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Vatican City — June 29, 2026

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Pope Leo XIV offered prayers for the victims of devastating twin earthquakes that struck Venezuela as the death toll continues to climb and rescuers race to save people trapped under collapsed buildings.

Speaking to pilgrims gathered outside St. Peter's Square June 28 after praying the Angelus prayer, the pope expressed his solidarity with the people of Venezuela and prayed for the dead and wounded.

"Praying to the Lord for the eternal rest of the deceased, I renew my spiritual solidarity with their families, the injured, and all who have been shaken by this tragedy," he said. "I also wish to express my gratitude and encouragement to those generously working on search and rescue efforts and providing assistance."

The twin earthquakes, which struck the northern Venezuelan state of La Guaira in the evening June 24, measured 7.2 and 7.5 in magnitude and were the strongest to hit Venezuela in more than a century.

According to The Associated Press, Venezuelan government officials reported June 28 that the death toll reached 1,450 and thousands more were injured. Rescuers

from around the world have arrived in the country to assist in rescue efforts.

The United Nations said more than 2,200 rescuers and 140 search dogs from 27 countries were working to locate trapped survivors. In a statement published June 25, Tom Fletcher, the U.N. under-secretary-general for humanitarian affairs and emergency relief coordinator, said the coming days would "require a massive collective effort to support the Government-led response and help communities."

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"Even before these earthquakes, nearly 8 million people in Venezuela were in need of humanitarian support. This disaster risks deepening existing vulnerabilities," Fletcher said.

Hours after the back-to-back earthquakes struck the country, Pope Leo sent an initial emergency donation of 100,000 euros (US$115,000) through the Dicastery for the Service of Charity, Vatican News reported.

The pope and the College of Cardinals also remembered the people of Venezuela during the two-day consistory at the Vatican. In his concluding address June 27, the pope expressed his closeness and that of the cardinals, and assured "prayers for the victims, their families, and all those suffering the consequences of this tragedy."

"We also entrust to the Lord all those engaged in relief efforts and ask that the international community continue to show solidarity with that beloved nation," he said.

Bishops' conferences also mobilized relief efforts across Latin America, organizing fundraisers and solidarity campaigns to assist the people of Venezuela.

The Peruvian bishops' conference and Caritas Peru announced June 27 the launch of the "Solidarity with Venezuela" campaign, urging the faithful to make donations "for the purchase of essential food items, hygiene products, medicines, and other vital supplies for the affected families."

"Every contribution, no matter the amount, represents a concrete gesture of fraternity and hope for our Venezuelan brothers and sisters," Caritas said. "In times of sorrow, solidarity unites people and demonstrates that no one is alone when

charity becomes action."

In Colombia, the bishops said they were also coordinating donations with its local Caritas and called on the "Catholic faithful, ecclesial communities, and all people of good will to demonstrate their solidarity through a generous, organized, and timely response that helps to address the needs of those who have been affected by this emergency."

Expressing its "closeness and solidarity" with the people of Venezuela, the Ecuadorian bishops' conference announced a collection July 5 in parishes across the country.

"We ask that this collection be encouraged during liturgical celebrations, in educational spaces, in parish communities, and in various pastoral works, encouraging the faithful and people of good will to collaborate generously, according to their means," the bishops said in a statement published June 25.

"Each contribution will be a concrete sign of closeness to those who today need to feel accompanied and supported," the statement read.