Update from Br. Ramón Gutiérrez, aa□□□□□□ dated March 2, 2010

"1. All of us Assumptionists in Chile are doing well. No one died or was hurt. I don't have any news to the contrary.

2. Family members of the Assumptionists are also well although some have lost their homes.

3. Most of our Assumptionist houses survived the earthquake, with some damage, but we are not at the mercy of the elements as many of our countrymen are.



4. Our basilica of Lourdes here in Santiago was severely affected; it is one of the most important and beautiful in the country. There are serious cracks in the walls and foundation, statues have been destroyed or damaged. But worst of all and most painful, some of the extraordinary stained glass windows have fallen out. The metal cross on the dome of the basilica (which is 60 meters high --- 190 feet) has become loose and is leaning to one side. As a result we have had to close the basilica and areas along the side of the basilica.

5. The monastery here at the basilica is old and spacious. In one wing large pieces of the cornices are cracked or have fallen. Large pieces of cement have come loose from walls and ceilings. In another wing there is beautiful tile work that has been seriously damaged, a type of tile work that longer exists. What will we do to replace it? With what? And how much will it cost?

6. One of the saddest things to see is the pillaging, looting, and assaults that have been taking place in so many places. This is a tragedy within a tragedy. People are afraid and a certain "psychosis" is setting in.

7. One of our greatest worries is that we have no confirmed reports from Lota, near the epicenter of the earthquake. We know nothing of certain of our brothers or of the city itself.

8. Yesterday 45 parishioners gathered to discuss with us what the most urgent needs are and how we can help those families most seriously affected.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support."