

> Subject: Typhoon Yolanda Relief Update

> Date: Mon, 25 Nov 2013 20:35:38 +0800

>

> Dear Friends,

>

> Last week, we didn't succeed in getting on the barge with our relief goods
> for Leyte because priority was given to the big-name organisations like Red
> Cross, UN, etc. This proved providential as we decided to go instead to the
> Bantayan Islands on the northern tip of Cebu. These islands too took a
> direct hit from typhoon Yolanda, but have not received any relief since much
> of the press coverage and relief has been focused on Leyte. Even from out
> in the sea, we could see the scope of destruction - fallen coconut trees,
> decimated banana plantations, flattened houses. As we drove from the pier
> with our van with relief goods, we could see the misery the typhoon had left
> behind - downed power lines and trees, destroyed houses, buildings with
> roofs gone with the wind. We decided to go to some of the far flung
> villages which the big relief trucks will not reach. After driving on
> narrow paved roads that became muddy driveways, we reached the fishing
> village of Baon.

>

> A few people were clearing the debris. As soon as they realized that we had
> relief goods, shouts went out as signal to others. Within a minute, scores
> of people began running from different directions screaming for joy. We
> managed to get them in a line and said some prayers. By now, they were in
> the hundreds. We began distributing the food packages we had brought -
> rice, sardines, noodles, water and some energy mix. We had brought 1000
> packages intending to distribute them in 3 or 4 villages, but here alone
> there were nearly 800 persons. After distributing 500 packages, we decided
> to move to another village. Thank God, the people understood.

>

> We drove for about 20 minutes to another village. The same scene unfolded
> with hundreds of people came running out of nowhere. Again, we managed to
> get them in line and distributed the packages. The situation became tense
> as people realized we were running out of packages. There were still a good
> 200 - 300 people who didn't get the package. The crowd was getting restless
> and chaotic, but we managed to leave there without any incident. Some
> pictures attached.

>

> As we drove back to the pier, we saw relief trucks being escorted by police
> and we understood why.

>

> More and more displaced people - some entire families - have taken shelter
> at our monastery and our new apostolate building in Cebu. We're getting
> used to the din of children running around our monastery. We're happy to

> see them happy after what they have gone through. The families attend daily
> Mass and prayers with the Brothers. There are now over 80 displaced persons
> from Leyte taking shelter with us.
>
> Tomorrow, two of us will head over to Tacloban and Palo in Leyte. Bros
> Noel, Gerald and Chris who returned from there told us of hundreds of
> children orphaned by the typhoon and many elderly who have no one and no
> where to go. We'll find out more about them so that we can take them into
> our homes. We'll also look at how to help some homeless families rebuild
> their homes.
>
> Thanks for your prayers and support. It means a lot to us and the people
> who turn to us for help. God bless you!
>
> In His service,
>
> Fr. Ambrose