

January 9, 2024

Diocesan Bishop Goro Matsuura

Report on the Damage Caused by the Noto Peninsula Earthquake and Response (2)

+Peace of the Lord

Daily reports on the Noto Peninsula earthquake are gradually revealing the number of deaths, missing people, and other damages, as well as the seriousness of the situation. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all of you who have been watching and praying for us with deep concern. We would like to report on our response and future plans.

I visited Nanao Church on January 7 (Epiphany of the Lord) with Bishop Narui, Father Kataoka, who is a pastor in charge of Hokuriku Area, members of Caritas Japan, ERST (Emergency Response Support Team of the Central Council), and of the Catholic Newspaper, in order to support the relief efforts and to observe the situation. On that occasion, we listened to the head of the adjacent kindergarten and others, and then offered Mass together with the congregation. Please see the attached report on this.

About the future

1. In the near future, we will set up the "NOTO Support Center" (Director: Father Yoshihiro Kataoka) at Kanazawa Catholic Church to serve as a point of contact for future support activities. From this center, we will provide information to everyone, request material support as needed, and accept volunteers. It will take some time before the center is open, but we will announce as soon as it is open.

<A Request to all of you>.

The reason for locating the support center at Kanazawa Church is that there are no priests at Nanao Church and Wajima Church, and the pastoral team all live at the church in Kanazawa. We also ask that you do not contact Our Lady of the Sea Kindergarten in Nanao and Umi no Hoshi Kindergarten in Wajima regarding support as much as possible. The support center will be opened in a few days and we will know the status of the kindergartens, so please direct any inquiries to this center.

2. Donations will continue to be handled by the Nagoya Diocese Headquarters Office. Caritas Japan has also begun fundraising, and we would like to summarize the relationship with Caritas Japan.

The purpose of donations to the Diocese of Nagoya is to support church-related facilities and their victims.

Donations to Caritas Japan are to be used to support local disaster victims.

Although the purposes of the donations are clearly separated, the Diocese of Nagoya will continue to provide space and volunteers not only for church-related facilities but also for local disaster victims in the future. For this purpose, ERST (Central Council and Disaster Emergency Response Team) will dispatch staff, and the relief funds sent to Caritas Japan will be used for these activities.

3. 1. What are the pillars of support?

① The first pillar of support is the restoration of church-related facilities and support for the victims of the earthquake and tsunami. Although the number of Japanese at Wajima Church is small, about 20 Filipinos attend the Tagalog Mass. The Wajima Church and kindergarten on the hill will eventually become a center of support for the community, but the retaining wall on the bank of the hill is crumbling and needs to be repaired.

② The second is support activities for the local community. As a first step, both Nanao and Wajima churches have Catholic kindergartens adjacent to them, so we will start by providing support for the children and their families with the cooperation of the kindergartens. The relief supplies we delivered on the 7th were the first of these.

4. We plan to establish specific support bases in the affected areas. We would like to build a base first at Hakui Church, which is located between Kanazawa and Nanao, and then at Nanao Church (in cooperation with a kindergarten), with the support center in Kanazawa at the center, and then at Wajima Church (in cooperation with a kindergarten).

5. In terms of pastoral care, the Hokuriku area (Fukui, Ishikawa, and Toyama prefectures) has several priests working together as a team, but the number of priests is small and aging. In addition to this, we are short of priests to be the center of disaster relief, and we are currently asking for the dispatch of priests from religious orders in the diocese.

Other Matters

We have asked that you write "NOTOearthquake" in the donation account, but we received an inquiry from a foreigner who pointed out that the kanji characters are difficult to read. So, when we accept the donation here, just "NOTO" or "NONO" will be fine.

We would ask for your continued prayers and support.

We would appreciate it if you could add the following "Prayer for Disaster Victims" to your daily prayers.

Prayer for Disaster Victims

O God, our Father, who pour out your boundless mercy on all people,
we pray with hope and trust.

We pray for those who are suffering and anxious because of the disasters,
and those who are living in anxiety.

We ask you to support them so that they will not lose hope,
and to grant eternal rest to those who have passed away.

By our prayer and action, may we testify that Christ, who bears the suffering of all people, is
always with us.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

(Approved by the Japanese Catholic Bishops' Conference on February 16, 2021)