



18 February 2014

Dear partner in faith:

Feb. 16 marked the 100th day since the devastating typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) struck the Philippines. The grim statistics of the storm's destruction do not lighten with the passing of time: approximately 6,000 people dead, roughly one million displaced, one-quarter of a million homes destroyed, and more than 100,000 children in need of food assistance.

Even as the Haiyan humanitarian response has now moved from the immediate emergency phase to the long-term recovery phase, aid agencies around the world marked the 100-day milestone by describing the continuing enormous need.

In the Diocese of Metuchen, the Catholic Charities Solidarity Team (CCST) -- the local hub for programming of Catholic Relief Services, the official international humanitarian organization of the U.S. Catholic community -- continues to stand with the Filipino people, both in Central New Jersey and in the Haiyan-affected region. We, too, move into a long-term recovery phase of fund-raising and project support, together with Catholic Relief Services. Our focus is on agricultural recovery and permanent housing, in the Archdiocese of Palo and the Diocese of Borongan. We have formed an eight-member Haiyan task force, a combination of Filipino-Americans and CCST veterans who have been to Guatemala and India in the aftermath of catastrophic natural disasters in those two countries.

As we strengthen our resolve to act on behalf of Haiyan survivors and communities for several years to come, we also look back in gratitude to the amazing generosity of the people in our diocese. Recently, at the Catholic Social Ministry Gathering in Washington, DC, Bishop Jaime Soto of Sacramento happened upon our table of delegates. When he heard Metuchen mentioned, he said, "Ah, yes, you did quite a bit for Haiyan." It turns out that we have sent approximately \$570,000 to Catholic Relief Services, either through parish collections or individual donations made directly to CRS. This places us in the top handful of dioceses in the country. On behalf of all who will benefit from this aid, my heartfelt thanks.

We are also grateful for the leadership of the Filipino Apostolate in the diocese, who continue to mobilize in many ways to deepen the response and further the awareness. The faith, kindness and gracefulness of the Filipino community in this time of trial has been nothing short of inspirational.

In coming months, we hope to visit the Haiyan-affected region ourselves and to offer a first-hand witness to the fruits of the generosity and to the continuing need. In the meantime, please continue your prayers and action for Haiyan sufferers. Stay informed at either crs.org or ccsolidarity.org, and send donations to Catholic Charities Solidarity Team, 56 Throop Ave., New Brunswick, NJ 08901.

In solidarity and peace,

Joseph J. Kerrigan
Msgr. Joseph Kerrigan