

## Letters from Overseas

### Cesar Santoyo Writes from Japan

Happy Easter!

April 2011

We would like to express our sincerest gratitude for the blessings that CJFF (*the outreach program to Filipino migrants*) received from The United Church of Canada. This support will be very useful in the mission for migrant Filipinos and their Japanese children, especially in adapting to the new conditions and challenges brought by the March 11, 2011, earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear radiation.



Last month was really a shocking spiritual experience for me and in our mission work. I was walking beside a hospital and a daycare near the office when the earth starts trembling, electric posts are swinging, electric cables above me are swaying, cars and trucks are dancing, and I can only walk with bended knees. Near the daycare I saw children crying and I came close to comfort them. But looking in their eyes, I feel like it was the eyes of Jesus and God who were looking on me and asking what I will do next.

From that time on I started to set up a 24-hour emergency hotline for people in distress. Telephone lines were cut off and it was good to learn from the young people that the Viber application for iPhone users was working. Through this Viber iPhone hotline I was reached by the Philippine media so that on the first day of the triple disaster it was me, my Viber conversation, and Facebook that was in the news in the Philippines. This media reporting from me over a week gave the people in the Philippines a better understanding about our situation.

The Wesley Center evacuation intervention is another remarkable experience. (*Wesley Centre is a mission centre established by the United Methodist Church. It has office space and accommodation for mission workers. They opened the doors to displaced people providing shelter, food, clothing, and emotional and spiritual support.*) There is a lot of news and information about the evacuees, but it is hardly noticed how God has brought different denominations together to work for the victims of disasters. The Catholics, Protestants, and born-again churches are working together, each taking a day to provide food for the stomach and sustenance for the spirit. Some of the women coming to the Centre have escaped two oppressors—the batterer husband and the nuclear risk. It is a reminder for us that in this triple disaster in Japan, women, especially Filipino migrant women and their children, bear most of the sufferings.

After 15 days of the calamity in Japan I attended the International Bible Study organized by EMS (*a German global mission organization*), in Alsfeld, Germany. I told a church service there how God moves in a mysterious way in the *agape*. I said that nuclear radiation is not new in Japan, which is the first and only victim of an atomic bomb in 1945. Many survivors from the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombing are still living and asking for justice. The Fukushima nuclear plant radiation is just a continuation and confirmation that the people of Japan need justice from manmade nuclear disaster. We need to bring justice to the victims of nuclear radiation in order to bring the kingdom of God.



And it is now Easter with the past month experience to reflect on and in brief—thanks for the sweet, loving God whose Holy Spirit fuels us to work harder in this very difficult times of Japan and shield us from potential nuclear radiation.

Our sincerest thanks.

Grace and Peace,

Cesar

---

*The United Church of Canada helps support a ministry to Filipino migrants in Japan, working with the United Church of Christ in Japan and the United Church of Christ in the Philippines. Cesar Santoyo, a missionary from United Church of Christ in the Philippines to the United Church of Christ in Japan, is the Director of the program.*

