



TYPHOON ONDOY ACTION ALERT (1)

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28 SEPTEMBER 2009

UCCP LAUNCHES RELIEF AID IN WAKE OF TYPHOON ONDOY



STRANDED Residents await rescuers during flooding caused by Typhoon Ondoy in Cainta Rizal (Reuters).

Typhoon Ondoy (Ketsana), which swept across Metro Manila, Southern Tagalog and parts of Central Luzon on Saturday, dumped more than the monthly average of rain in just six hours, and more rain than Typhoon Katrina. This brought the worst flooding in the region in more than four decades, leaving at least 86 people dead and 32 others missing. Rescuers continue to recover bodies from muddy floodwaters and save victims from rooftops. Some clung to high-voltage power lines to save themselves from raging floodwaters. Many were stranded in the flood without food and shelter. More than 330,000 people have been affected, including some 59,000 who were brought to schools, churches and other evacuation shelters.

The UCCP building at 877 EDSA has been opened as an evacuation center. Delivery of relief aid is being organized in coordination with the affected jurisdictions and conferences, although not without complications as some churches are also under water. Many of our members, including staff, have been rendered victims of the typhoon, some of their homes still submerged in water. We await more reports on the extent of the damage.

The loss of lives and the destruction of properties worsened the already depressed situation in the country and have deepened the sense of fear and insecurity among the people.



LAKESIDE CHURCHES IN SOUTHERN TAGALOG FLOODED

While much attention has focused on Metro Manila, the surrounding towns and cities have also been flooded. Damage has exceeded that wrought by other storms in recent memory. Most affected in Calamba, Laguna is Barangay Lingga, where schools are full of evacuees. UCCP Lingga was not able to hold worship services yesterday because the church is being used as an evacuation center. Among the displaced are 70 families from the congregation. Based on experience, residents believe it will take until Christmas for the water to subside. Houses in Barangay Tibag were swept away causing 206 families to relocate to an elementary school for temporary shelter. Fear of a health epidemic rises with the overcrowding.

Flood waters have reached UCCP local church areas in Malaban, Sucol and Binan in Laguna province. They have also reached UCCP San Mateo and Banaba churches in Rizal province.

Pastor Berlin Guerrero and Paete volunteers report deep water in some portions of Siniloan town. Floodwaters have entered the UCCP church in Mabitac. Fearing landslides in their areas, people continue to move out. Relief goods from Luisiana and Victoria have been brought to the typhoon victims in Paete. One hectare of land from the local government in Paete is reported to be given as a relocation area; a meeting will be held on Wednesday for the transfer of the land title.

One UCCP member in Cabuyao, Laguna is included among the dead. The most devastated area in our conference is Rizal district where Cainta and Pasig are still under water. Communication with coordinators in Rizal coordinators and Quezon has been difficult as most of the lines are down.

UCCP Calamba has allocated P10, 000 as a seed fund for the relief goods that will be distributed today. (Based on a report from Rev. Ricardo Bernardino)