

News Letter No. 10

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Issuer:
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Editor:
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Let Us Walk Together Project

NSKK Support for Victims of the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake



Packaging 'Easter (re-creation!) eggs' made from Madoka Arahama's "mayudama" silk-worm cocoons for distribution. Happily they were sold out. Many thanks to all!



Helping gather the *wakame* seaweed crop. Our thanks to the many who answered our call for volunteers. (Jusanhama, Ishinomaki City)

Encounters Expand the Circle of Support Work in the Sendai Base Area (2) (continuing from Newsletter No. 7, February 2012)



Delivering goods to the homes of parishioners affected by the disaster
March 2011



A 2nd Class Home Helper Class
March 2012



Japanese language study group,
Shizuoka July – December 2011



Helping people relocate from a damaged home – Iwakiri May 2011



Tea party in the meeting room of a temporary housing facility – Shinchi
(Activities are continuing on a regular basis)



Fukushima children's project
(Activities are continuing on a regular basis)

Happening prior to establishment of
Sendai Base Area

A Community Distributing Love

Rev. Dominic Lee Chan-hee (Tohoku Diocese)

Time goes by so fast. Looking back over the past year, it is impossible to sense that a year could go past so quickly.

Yet a year has already gone by. March 11, 2011 is a day I will never forget. And that is not just me. For us all, it will continue to be a painful, bitter memory remaining deep within us for the rest of our lives.

Because of the terrible disaster a year ago, our neighbors today are eking out their lives with many kinds of pain in their hearts. The pain of having seen their beloved family members called to God's kingdom before them, the pain of having lost the home that created a center of love and community for their family, the workplace where they shared the sweat of their labors with fellow workers, the school where they studied with their friends – even now our neighbors are still suffering from so much loss. I myself feel the pain of separation from my own family, who had been living in Japan with me but had to go back to South Korea after the earthquake. Today, even though a year has gone past, my second son still suffers from the fear of earthquakes and thinks of Japan as 'a frightening country.'

A year ago, immediately after the great disaster struck, it was all we could do in Sendai Christ Church just to confirm whether our parishioners were safe. Communications were cut off in many places and trying to confirm people's safety took a great deal of time.

One day I heard two women church members talking about a distribution of daily necessities – food and water and the like – that they were going to make to victims of the disaster in a certain area. Because there was no gasoline for their car, they planned to load the goods onto bicycles and go. To be honest, even if I heard the name of the area, I still wouldn't know where it is. But I thought it would be a village close by if they were going on bicycles. However everyone who heard them

said it was impossible, and in the end it was decided they should go by taxi. Of course, I went along with them. After loading the taxi to the brim with water, vegetables rice and the like, we set about visiting parishioners' homes. I was amazed how far it was and that these two sisters could have considered going there by bicycle. They were really heroic!

We visited the various parishioners in their homes, to confirm their safety, and exchange stories with them, and check whether there were things they still needed, and we also prayed together, initially in Korean but from fairly soon after that, in Japanese. The people we prayed for often wept, and said simply "Thank you" to us.

Eventually it became possible to buy a full tank of gasoline for the car, instead of 10 liters per car, as it had been set. So we filled my car with gasoline, and used it to visit families and distribute food and water, and God's love.

Looking back, now that a year has passed, I think the service we performed then was probably the start of Tohoku Diocese's "House of Sharing*" support activities. I think even this small practice was an experience for us to practice Jesus' love. And I hope that, even in a small way, we will continue to be a community that shares Jesus' love with others.



In March this year, the South Korean national newspaper Chosun Ilbo published an article

introducing the work of Rev. Lee Chan-hee under the title "Great Eastern Japan Earthquake : South Korean Priest Serving in the Tohoku Relief Effort." (The photograph was provided by the Project, and was taken in June 2011 in Shinchi.)

***Editors' Note:** The "House of Sharing" (called "Nanume Chip" in Korean) is one of the social support activities of the Anglican Church of Korea.

AID FOR HARD-HIT INLAND AREAS IN SENDAI

OUR WORK AT IWAKIRI [SENDAI]

Fr. Kiyosumi Francis Hasegawa (Tohoku Diocese)

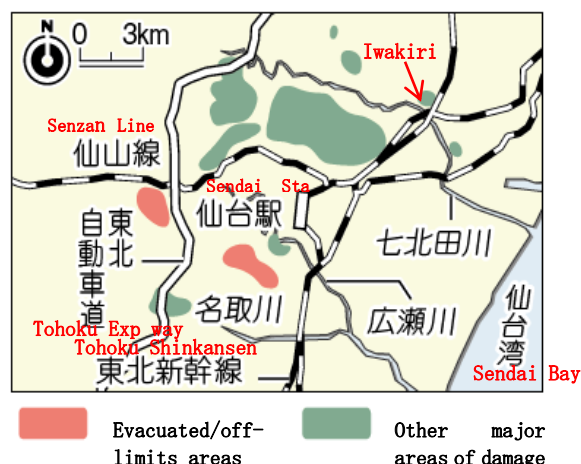
On April 21st, 2011, I was driving down the Tohoku Expressway in “Augustine”, (all the cars donated to or rented in this project have been given a nickname) in order to celebrate Easter at St. Savior Church, Akita. On the way, I took a break at a parking area, where I bought a copy of the Kahoku Shimpō [the local newspaper] at a convenience store. One plea in the paper tore at my heart – “We have been left out by government relief.” It made me freeze up. Until then, I had been scurrying around here and there to places hit by the 3/11 earthquake, but all the areas I had visited and served were in the tsunami-deluged area. These people who had been left out were in Miyagino Ward, an area of inland Sendai. I was shocked.

(A house destroyed by the earthquake, in Iwakiri, Miyagino Ward, Sendai)



On the first Sunday after Easter, after Holy Communion at St. Peter's Chapel in Izumi Ward, Sendai, I went to visit the place related to this plea. The whole neighborhood was full of debris – houses totally or half collapsed. Since the location for these victims was identified in the newspaper, I easily found the place and spoke to the people involved, a married couple. We had such a friendly conversation, it was hard to believe I was talking with them for the first time. This conversation was the trigger for us providing “Super Houses®” [a type of

Areas of residential damage in Sendai



prefabricated houses]. So far, we have built seven prefab houses accommodating the former residents of eight devastated Iwakiri houses. Further demolition of collapsed houses is currently in progress, and rebuilding is gradually proceeding through this area (though this is slow), with many houses getting rebuilt this spring. However, there are also some devastated houses that cannot be rebuilt – a heartbreaking reality.

A project for Fukushima's children

Staffer Shota Iwamoto (Kyoto Diocese)

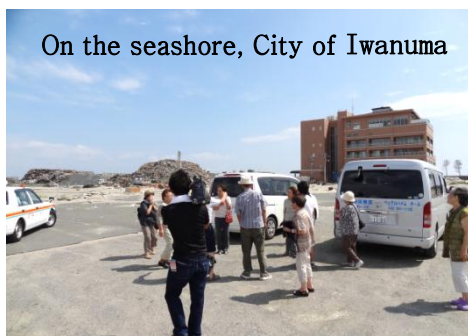
With the meltdown of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, run by Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), large amounts of radioactive substances have been emitted. Yet even though radiation levels are quite high, there are many areas which are not specified as evacuation areas and do not receive concrete forms of support from TEPCO or from government sources. St. Stephen's Church, Fukushima is located in one such area. The church's neighborhood has not been specified as an evacuation area. Still, since the radiation level there is abnormally high, the children are forced to stay indoors as much as possible, to say nothing of playing outdoors. So we of the “Let Us Walk Together” project prepared a “short term evacuation” program where the families that attend the church and their friends could go to play outside in Sendai. This program is basically focused on the children, getting them to stay at Tohoku Diocese facilities in Sendai overnight and

then letting them play to their hearts' content, enjoying the outdoor activities to fit the season of the event. These children, who normally were having little opportunity to play outdoors, are having a whale of time doing things like rolling around on the grass, or running around.

We are convinced that this sort of assistance, which is not urgent material aid, but is much more unstructured in nature, will be essential in the coming days and years, including how it enables victims to start their new lives. Also, as their living environment changes, the wishes of those who have been affected will change. We are determined to continue our aid for them in ways that will be responsive to the real needs of these people.

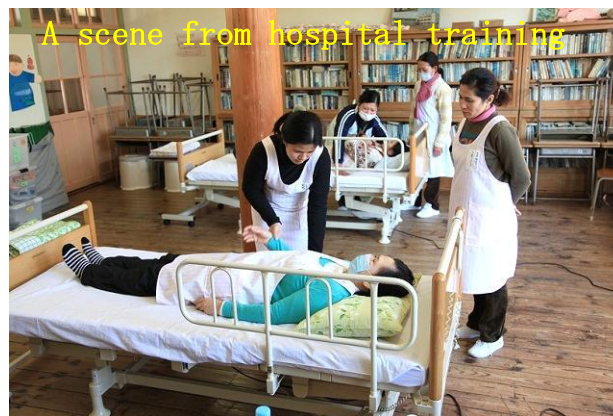
Other work done by Sendai Base

In the *City of Natori*, "Let Us Walk Together" is working at the Hakozyuka Sakura temporary housing complex, located in an inland area of the City. This complex now accommodates many refugees from Yuriage, a coastal area of the same city which was devastated by the tsunami of March 11th. Many residents there asked for "bus tours for shopping," and this has now become an established regular event. Many aged residents join these bus tours. Occasionally, the tour bus goes out of its way to visit these residents' old stomping ground at Yuriage, or a "super sento," [a luxury bath house].



On the seashore, City of Iwanuma

At *Shizugawa, Minamisanriku Town*, some women from the Philippines, who came to the town as brides, have been working hard on reading and writing Japanese in order to obtain "Class 2 Home Helper" licenses. The lecture work is now over, and they have begun practical training at a hospital. We feel confident they will be certified as helpers. While these mothers are busy with their training, some of our male staffers are taking care of their children. What a heartwarming scene!



A scene from hospital training

Now, even the temporary housing complex at Shinchu Town has tea parties and, recently, movie events. In all the temporary housing complexes, it seems that many aged residents tend to stay cooped up in their houses. If only they could come out of their rooms, so that we could offer them a good time! For this purpose, people with many different talents have been invited to entertain them, with magic shows, massages, and even a "rakugo" [old-time Japanese comic storytelling] performance which was held in March. As our efforts enter a second year, we assume we will face some new issues as well. We ask for your continued prayers. (Wr: Public Relations)

Please visit our website as well,
at the URL shown below.



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