



Spring Newsletter

Japan-Korea



THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE OF TOHOKU AND KANSAI REGIONS

Some Afterthoughts by Wency Laguidao, omi

March 11, 2011 was an ordinary Friday in Tokyo, a metropolis of about 30 million people. As in many other big cities around the world everyone was looking forward to another weekend when they could sigh with relief, *TGIF!* This was until building started to sway to tremors that were stronger than usual. The sigh of relief that everyone looked forward to was soon to be cries of utter disbelief at the horrendous events that would unfold later that afternoon and in the following days.

Tokyo is used to earthquakes, in fact, Tokyoites just ignore them since they happen almost on an everyday basis though most of them are not palpable. However, many people knew that the tremors on that fateful Friday afternoon were different from usual and that, a disaster was in the offing somewhere. Their fears were confirmed when televisions started to air to an anxious nation the earliest terrifying footages of the rampaging waters of the *tsunami*. A great earthquake has happened in the Pacific basin of northeast Japan, particularly in the prefectures of Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima at 2:46 PM (JST) at an intensity 9.0 in the Richter scale (upgraded from 8.8).

The whole nation was placed on a tsunami alert immediately after the violent tremors, very high alert level for all places on the Pacific side and the rest of the nation on high alert for the wrap-around effect of the tsunami. At the badly hit areas, sirens and loudspeakers blared frantically to tell people to evacuate immediately to high grounds but there was just not enough time for everyone to flee. And besides, most of those people who perished have lived there from birth and were convinced that they knew the behaviors of the ocean which to many of them was a friend and the source of their livelihood.

The fury of the tsunami washed away small farming and fishing villages on the northeastern coast, peaceful and quaint communities of hardworking farmers and fishermen who remained unspoiled by the influence and sophistication of the metropolis and big city centers which are only hours away. Government employees in these small villages remained in their work places trying to warn the people of the imminent arrival of the tsunami and to receive frantic phone calls from people not sure of what to do. Many of these government employees perished while dispensing their duties.

The hours and days that followed were excruciating moments to a nation reduced to a state of shock and disbelief. Can these really be happening? Since there was not much time for people to flee, are there people in those houses, cars, boats and ships big and small that are being carried away like toys by the rampaging waters? But the pictures showed them all, the fury of nature was captured by digital technology and the rest is history.

As of this writing, the state of the nuclear reactor plant in Fukushima which is in the affected area remains uncertain. They are still trying frantically different conventional methods to contain the situation and prevent a major nuclear disaster. Many foreign embassies have advised their nationals to leave the vicinities of Tokyo.

The Delegation of Japan would like to thank once again the many people, starting with our Superior General, Fr. Louis Lougen, OMI, and the Oblate friends from all over the world for the concern and assurance of prayers and solidarity.

(N.B. This article is being published to beat the deadline of the newsletter. I will try to expand this same article to give more update and reflections on the disaster and continuing effort towards the daunting task of rehabilitation in the affected areas and will email to our friends and benefactors outside of Japan in the next few days.)

“INCREDIBLE INDIA!” AORC 2011

Wency Laguidao

Picture a nation with more than 1B population, cradle of the world's major religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism, with a culturally diverse population that speak some 400 regional dialects and that is India in a nutshell. Hate it or love it, India's position as an emerging superpower is something to reckon with. It is no surprise that the recently elevated Oblate Province continues to grow in the number of personnel and mission under the able leadership of Fr. Francis NALLAPPAN, the 1st Provincial to be named. The Oblates are concentrated mostly in the southern region of Tamil Nadu but they will start a new mission in New Delhi anytime soon. They have a juniorate, a philosophate and two scholasticates (yes, there are two!). The new Provincialate is nestled close to the top of Saint Thomas Mount, where legend says Saint Thomas the Apostle was martyred. A small shrine stands on top where one can also have a 360 degrees breathtaking view of the bustling city of Chennai (formerly called Madras), one of the many IT centers in India.

The Oblate Province of India (aka St. Eugene's Province) was host to this year's AORC meeting held at the Provincialate in Chennai, Feb 21-25. The accommodations were modest but our hosts did their best in trying to satisfy the different palates of guests while remaining faithful to what is genuine Indian cuisine. Put aside the horrendous traffic that gives you a free roller-coaster experience even for a very short ride, the warmth and hospitality of the people compensate for the minor inconveniences that visitors might experience. The solemn ritual of welcoming guests in the lighting of the welcome stand, the anointing

of every guest and the lively and rhythmic welcome dance performed by young girls in their colorful native attire tell you that you are on the sacred grounds of a people so rich in culture and religious tradition. My first visit to India was in 1999 and in a decade the transformation was quite impressive.

The meeting was attended by Fr. Clement WAIDYASEKARA, General Councilor for Asia-Oceania, the Provincials of Colombo, Jaffna, Philippines, Australia, Indonesia, India, the delegations of Pakistan, Thailand, China, Japan, mission of Korea, apostolic delegate of Turkmenistan, a delegate from Vietnam and the secretary general of AORC. The delegation superior of Bangladesh could not make it due to problems in securing a visa.

The annual meeting is mainly spent for evaluation of various programs undertaken in the region, planning for future actions, updating on major and pressing issues, etc. Deepening of camaraderie among the leaders in the region is also an unwritten purpose of the yearly meeting. Swami (or “guru”) Fr. Joseph SAMARAKONE, OMI gave a talk on the “Theological Trends in Asia from Indian Perspectives.” The group was also able to visit the ashram run by “Fr. Sam” in the outskirts of Chennai.



Superiors of AORC with Fr. Clement

Fr. Clement in his short report identified four areas of concern that the units in the region have to focus on in terms of deepening of awareness and creating programs for animation: 1. Leadership among religious and the laity since Asia is a vast region where the general population is young;” 2. Justice and Peace issues. Violation of human rights continue to be rampant in the

region. 3. Inter-cultural dialogue. The region is home to major religions the largest number of members, hence, initiative for inter religious and cultural dialogue should start from the region; 4. Migration is a reality in almost all of the Asian region.

Other major topics taken up during the meeting were:

- International Scholasticate in Asia. Almost but not quite! The region fell short again on its plan to start a scholasticate in Manila staffed by formators in the region. However, AORC is thankful to the Philippine Province for opening its formation houses (Novitiate and Scholasticate) to the other units in the region. Right now, there are novices from China and soon there will be scholastics from Korea and other places joining the scholasticate of the Philippine Province.
- Vicariate of Sylhet, Bangladesh is being offered to the care of the Oblates. AORC wanted to deliberate on this offer but Fr. Emil MORAES, Superior of Bangladesh Delegation could not attend so the discussion did not go very far. The General Administration wants the AORC to look into the pros and cons of the offer.
- Fr. Francis NALLAPPAN of India was elected the new AORC President taking over from Fr. Ramon BERNABE of the Philippines. Next AORC meeting will be held next year in Colombo.



Colors, smiles and warmth. Welcoming- Indian-style



5000 year old Hindu temple in Kanchipuram

Dick Harr
Oblate Fathers Retirement and Infirmary
Tewksbury, Massachusetts

Each one of you has been remembered very well in my Masses and prayers here. That is one task I'm still able to fulfill. Be assured of this.

I've turned 85 in January, and I must admit that my wheels are slowing down. The community here of 33 Oblate priests and brothers is really excellent. Community living is so mutually helpful. And conditions are excellent, too. I've always dreamed about my later years in the Oblates and all has fallen nicely into place.

Our winter here was a record one, with more than 30 inches of snow so far. We'll probably get a bit more and then spring sets in. It's been really cold and this we can do without.

Every day when weather permits I try to get out for a walk. Usually it's for a half mile each time. The fresh air and exercise help so much.

Hospital care is available when needed. This year so far I've been admitted twice to the hospital nearby for digestive disorders. It's nothing too serious. Our nursing

care in our infirmary is 24 hours daily and is excellent.

A very happy Easter to each of you. All of you have a good share of my prayer life here. May God bless your Lent and Easter with rich graces.

Vincenzo Korea

As you know Anna's House is a Center to help homeless and poor people. But in the last years became also a Center to help 'normal' people to be aware of the needy and the problems of our society. More and more 'normal people' came in Anna's House because they want SERVE, HELP and LOVE the people in difficulties. These people are all of age (Young, old, man, women, students...) and belong to different religions (Buddhist, Muslims, protestants, non-believers...).

Anna's House became more and more an 'appeal to practice love' for those who Jesus loves more: the poor.

Below is a letter sent by 6 nice and beautiful girls who wanted to do something mindful of their sixteenth birthday.

Dear Father Vincenzo:

Hello, Father. We are currently tenth graders at Korea International School in Bundang.

For most of us, this year – 2011- is our sixteenth year. In many Western countries, the sixteenth birthday is a big event usually celebrated with big birthday parties and even receiving a car (in America). The six of us wanted to celebrate our sixteenth birthday in a more meaningful way. We wanted to spend each month serving our community and bettering ourselves and our world.

In January, we were all scheduled to go on a ski trip together (not community service, we're afraid) and decided to challenge ourselves by overcoming our fears and going up the highest slope we could. This month (February) we will be sending books, toys, and clothes to Durebang (두레방) in Dongducheon; it is a shelter for women and children who have been abandoned by American soldiers.

For the month of March, we want to honor you and your work with the Seongnam community by donating rice and clothes as well as helping serve dinner at the shelter (if you think this would be a good idea).

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to share with our "neighbors" in need.

Sincerely,

PROJECT "16"

Katie Cho, Susie Kang, Erin Kim, Heejin Kim, Rachel Seo, Jerica Yoon





Happy Holy Week and Easter

Bill Maher

In the past week I've seen the destructive force of earth quakes and tsunami as well as the death of one of the parishioners, Mrs. Ogawa, who served this church for over forty years as cook and housekeeper and one of the pillars of the parish. I think the entire world has been rudely awakened to the reality of the fragility of our existence in this world and the fact that we really have no ultimate control over what happens in our lives. It leaves one num and it will take some time before the extent of the damage (both physical and psychological) will be fully realized. On top of that the nuclear power plant being disabled and posing a threat to the environment and peoples lives adds more uncertainty to our future. Problems now days seem to affect not just the area where they happen but have a much greater impact on the world as a whole. War in the Middle East effects life in Japan and these events in Japan have repercussions in many other areas of the world.

At times like this I thank the Lord for the gift of faith in His loving care for each and every one of us and the faith that this is not all there is but resurrection and the promise of eternal life with Him awaits us all. In this season of Lent and preparation for the celebration of this year's Easter I gain great strength in that faith.

We can already see signs of resurrection faith in the spirit of concern, love and care for all effected by these events and the willingness to share with others what little is left or what others have in abundance. Many countries, groups, and individuals are already coming forward to help. Let's pray that this spirit continues in our world today. It's a sign of resurrection and for me a proof of our faith in the Resurrection. Happy Holy Week and Easter.



"Graduation of Genivaldo from Nanzan University, March 21, 2011"



Gen, CONGRATULATIONS!



x17552228 fotosarch.com

Tom Maher

Two days before Ash Wednesday, the reading for the Mass for this year, was from the book of Tobit. The Jews were in exile at that time and they were forbidden to bury a fellow Jew who had been murdered. Tobit left his dinner table to do this a very charitable and heroic deed. Shortly after this his wife came home with a goat which she had received as a bonus for her good work but her husband accused her of stealing it and was very angry. She in turn for very angry when he ordered her to return it and she retorted, "Where are your charitable deeds now? Where are your virtuous acts? See, your true character is finally showing itself".

The book, "The Spirituality of Imperfection" by Ernest Kurtz and Katherine Ketcham has impressed me very deeply. Another example is the following, "I'm not OK. You're not OK. And that's OK. We are trying to grow along spiritual lines."

Another part which I remember is Jean Pierre Caussade's ideas on flexibility, especially the opposite of it which he calls "pious pigheadedness". Quote: "Too many people identify spiritual prowess with "being perpetually busy". We can come to be as dangerously attached to our own will in matters of piety and holiness as we can in worldly things, and such "pious pigheadedness" is still self love however spiritualized.

When Fr. Bill had the church built, he had a large outdoor statue of Christ with his arms extended greeting everyone who passed. Since then Mr. and Mrs. Yasumitsu built a grotto in front of our church for a beautiful statue of Mary holding the child Jesus. I have seen (non-Catholics) stop and pray there. I talked to a young man praying there and now he is preparing to be baptized this Easter. As I was writing this, two friends came and we talked about alcoholism. My plan was to finish this article in a hurry but God's plan was to be flexible. Let it be...as Mary prayed. And now I feel God had a better plan and I am happy I was flexible.



Church in Nakamura

Br.Nobuhiko YAGI



この1年間、松山の愛光学園で中学3年生の「宗教」の授業を受け持ってきました。

大変な部分もたくさんありましたが、彼らから学ぶこともたくさんありました。

教えることも大事だけど、学ぶことも大事だと実感した体験でした。

←愛光学園での授業の様子

[In the class-room](#)

今年 WYD 開催年なので、その準備に向けて今から忙しくなりそうです。その中で色々な若者たちと出会いながら、オブレート会の召命に向いている人たちを探してみようかなと思っています。

去年の若者対象のクリスマス会→
(高松にて)

Christmas gathering 2010 in
Takamatsu



It is one year since I went to teach Religion to 3rd year middle school children in Matsuyama. Although there were some difficulties I could teach them. Teaching is important, but learning from them is also important.

Now I am busy preparing for the World Youth Day (WYD). My encounter with youth will help me get to know them. I am thinking of looking for young people who will be interested in the Oblates.

Post war Sri Lanka Brad Rozairo

This January I went home on vacation. After the civil war this was the first time I visited my home town Trincomalee. The journey from Colombo to Trincomalee by bus is a long one. It takes for about 6 hours. During the war the military check points made the journey longer and tiresome too. But this time there were no check points and I enjoyed the trip.

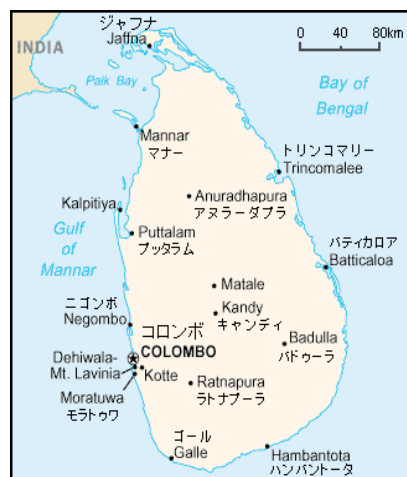
Although there is military presence in some places, Trincomalee is apparently calm. People are free to move around and travel even at night. Since there are no incidents or bombings people can sleep peacefully. Children and adults go to school and work without any fear. Broken buildings and roads are being repaired. There are signs of peace in my home town.

But, even though the 26 year old civil war is over, the suffering is yet to end. Recently I read an article published by Pax Romana a non-governmental organization in special consultative status. I do not know whether the issues mentioned in that article are

made known to the world outside. Pax Romana expresses its grave concern, because the Human Rights Council has failed to take effective action to prevent abuses on the ground. I would like to mention some of the things that are taking place in post war North and East.

According to Pax Romana, people in recently settled villages in the North have been prevented from meeting together to form associations and discuss and take actions on community issues. Last May the military cancelled several religious and cultural events planned in the North to remember those killed during the war. A Tamil Deputy Director of Education in Jaffna was shot dead after he had opposed the singing of the National Anthem of Sri Lanka in the majority language of Sinhalese. A priest in the East well known for his work on child rights was arrested along with five of his staff. Also in the East, women human rights defenders who had attended training were questioned about the training by police officers. There are threats and attacks on foreign media and so on.

In conclusion Pax Romana has got this to say. **“The Human Rights Council should urge the government of Sri Lanka to provide an environment devoid of fear in the North and East for Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) and NGOs to operate and take actions to acknowledge problems, investigate allegations of violations, prosecute suspects and convict perpetrators. The long line of incidents and absolute impunity indicates the need for international monitoring and assistance to HRDs in the North and East, including by the UN Country Team and Diplomatic community in Colombo”.**



“Post war Sri Lanka” (in Japanese):

戦争終結後のスリランカは今・・・



冬の寒さを感じながら桜の季節に入ったように思いますが皆さんいかがお過ごしでしょうか。自然災害で困っている日本、そして今苦しい生活を送っている東北の皆さまは一日も早く元気になりますように祈りたいと思います。

さて、ご存知の方もいると思いますがインド洋にある小さな島国・スリランカでは、これまで 25 年間内戦が続いてきました。それはタミル人 {反政府組織 LTTE (タミル・イーラム解放のトラ)} がスリランカからの独立を目指している独立戦争でした。現在のスリランカでは、人口の約 73% をシンハラ人が占めています。当然ながら政府や議会もシンハラ人が多数であり、国民全体の 18% しかいないタミル人は強い権力を持っていません。スリランカは民族問題を解決するためにインドの介入を受けたり、ノルウエーの調停で一時停戦したりしましたが、散発的なテロが続いたので再び戦いが起こりました。それ以来政府軍が徹底攻撃を続けたので解放のトラは力を失った。政府軍は 2009 年 1 月に解放のトラの拠点を陥落し、指導者を殺害し、5 月に戦闘終結を宣言しました。

私は今年一月休暇で故郷スリランカに行って来ました。内戦が終わってから帰ったのは初めてでした。内戦でやられた私の故郷トリンコマリーで過ごした一ヶ月は今までと違った休暇でした。今回感じたことについて少し分かち合いたいと思います。

まず旅のことでありますが戦争中たくさんのチェックポイント（検問）があつて検査が厳しく時間がかかりましたが今はスムーズに旅が出来るようになっています。事件や爆発の音がないので市民は安心して眠れるようになっています。子供も大人も心配なく学校や仕事に行っています。戦争中夜外に出るのは怖くてみんな家の中にいたが今は夜旅をしたり、映画を見に行ったり、友達の家遊びに行ったりしています。政府軍が町の安全を守るために

幾つかのところに立っている姿も見られます。戦争の被害を受けた建物や道路などが新しくなっているのを見ると平和が訪れたように感じます。



長い戦争が終結しました。しかし、後に残されたのは国内避難民（2009年6月1日現在の避難民数は280,580人）です。私は戦争でやられたスリランカの北部には行っていませんので何も言えないのですがそこから来られた方の話を聞いたり、友達やインターネットを通して集めた情報を読んだりすると北に住んでいる人々が苦しい生活を送っていることが分かります。戦争難民キャンプは強制収容所になったり、人が誘拐されたり、脅迫されたりすることがあります。難民の帰還が始まっていると思いますがみんなじゃないと聞いています。難民のある者は自由に移動することができず、戦争で破壊されてしまった自分たちの元の住まいに戻るにはまだまだ時間がかかります。

最後に、日本カトリック新聞に書いてありましたスリランカのある司教様の言葉を引用したいと思います。「戦争は、表面上は終わりました。しかし、私たちが真に戦争の終結を祝うことができるのは、私たちが偏見を克服し、一致した国民として共生できるようになった時のことです」。

ブラッドリー・ロザイロ神父



3. *Miguel Fritz, Councilor for Latin America*
4. *Rohan Silva, Provincial, OMI Colombo Province*
5. *Most Rev. Michael D. Pfeifer OMI, Bishop of San Angelo*
6. *Gilberto Pinon, OMI General Administration*
7. *Loudeger Mazile, OMI General Administration*
8. *Fr. Arun W. Rozario omi, International Scholasticate, Rome.*
9. *Mariampillai Paul OMI , Provincial, Jaffna*
10. *Francis Nallappan OMI, Provincial, India*
11. *Mon Bernabe, Provincial, OMI Philippines*
12. *Phil Estrella, OMI*
13. *Emil Moraes OMI, Superior, Bangladesh*
14. *Ron LaFramboise*
15. *Ange Siani*
16. *Bill Johnson OMI*
17. *Mauro Concardi OMI*
18. *Eugene Canas OMI*
19. *Camille Piche OMI*
20. *Missions-Prokur der Hünfelder Oblaten, Germany*
21. *Fr. Aloys Terliesner, omi, Mission procurator of the Middle European Province*
22. *Roy, Superior, OMI Pakistan*

23. *Jun Jacobe OMI, Hong Kong Mission*

24. *Taddy Castillo OMI, Philippines*

25. *Iting, OMI*

26. *Nestor Silva OMI, OMI Lacombe - Canada*

27. *Samuel, Korean scholastic*

28. *Peter Hong, Korean scholastic*

29. *Palomo, OMI- Philippines*

30. *Vincenzo, Korea*

31. *Fr. Bernard Ondap OMI, Philippines*

TO ALL OF YOU

Our heartfelt Thanks, Arigato Gozaimashita.



The Members of the Delegation of Japan

Provincial Delegation of Japan-Korea

Our next OMI Newsletter (printed form) will be published in August. This issue goes out to the rest of the Oblate world. We expect each one to make your contribution.

Thank you.

Communication Team (Jerry, Nobu, Brad & Varam)