



ASIA/JAPAN - Youth volunteers are mobilising in the areas affected by the earthquake; lack of food and fuel

Sendai (Agenzia Fides) – “Today the dominant feeling is fear. The biggest concern is that of the nuclear power plant in Fukushima. It is a ghost from Japanese history coming back to haunt us. But it must be said that the people are not indulging in panic, instead they are reacting with poise and dignity. Also to be noted is the enthusiasm and solidarity of the hundreds of youth who are asking to go, as volunteers, to assist displaced people in affected areas.” Fr Daisuke Narui, Director of Caritas Japan, recounted this to Fides, on his way to Sendai, where he will attend an emergency meeting tomorrow with the local Bishop and other Japanese Bishops. The Director reports that, despite the fear, “only the people within the first 20 km of the nuclear power plant have been evacuated. The rest are waiting. Furthermore, in the worst affected areas the main problem is the lack of food and fuel. As there is no fuel, people can not move. And they are left feeling powerless in the face of this tragedy.”

“The President of Caritas Japan, Bishop Isao Kikuchi, will also attend” the meeting of Bishops, tomorrow, 16 March, in Sendai, says Fr Narui. “The agenda consists of two points: how to help the victims and what to do, as the Catholic Church, at so tragic a point in the Country's history. Young people are continually coming to Caritas, from all the dioceses, to offer their availability as volunteers to bring aid to the areas most affected by the disaster. This is an important sign that gives us hope for the future.”

The Bishops' Conference of Japan has also received a telegram of condolences and solidarity from the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples. The Congregation, which is closely following developments in the situation, in close contact with the Church in Japan, expresses its closeness and comfort to the victims, assuring its constant prayer and its readiness to meet the needs of the Church in Japan. Similar sentiments were expressed by the Prefect of the Missionary Congregation, Cardinal Ivan Dias, to the Apostolic Nuncio in Japan. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 15/3/2011)