



## **ASIA/PHILIPPINES - Enhance the network of religious congregations for aid to the population: a testimony from Cebu**

Cebu (Agenzia Fides) - According to the latest figures released by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), typhoon Hyan in the Philippines has affected at least 10 million people, of whom 4000 in a lethal way. About 400,000 are in 1500 centers for displaced people and more than 4 million live hosted by friends and relatives. Sister Mary Joaquim, of the Missionaries of Hope, is in Cebu and in a note sent to Fides Agency talks about the terrible moment the Country is going through after the earthquake and typhoon. The nun writes: "It is comforting to see professional, material and financial intervention, that the international community is offering to the people and that the Church has mobilized. However, it is equally shocking to find out that certain funds and assets do not reach their legitimate objectives. The religious who are on the spot, are those who receive less aid to be distributed. Instead, one must further enhance the presence of religious congregations, male and female, that live in places where emergencies occur. There are so many religious congregations with very few funds available through which they cannot in any way meet the people's needs". Sister M. Joaquim continues: "I met a nun who came from the outskirts of Tacloban, who told me about 9,500 families that are still isolated and without any help. She also told me about loads of emergency relief goods and only half were distributed. It is terrible to see such waste, and I think the religious above all, with their vow of poverty and their dedication to Christ, would reach more effectively those most in need and would help them cope with the many, huge difficulties they are going through".

Sister Mary Joachim concludes by asking to pray for the people of the Philippines, "so that this event becomes an occasion for conversion for all, missionaries, and ordinary people". (AP) (Agenzia Fides 21/11/2013)