



## **On the Suffering that Typhoon *Urduja* Brought to our People**

During this holy season of Advent in preparation for the joyous season of Christmas, particularly as we celebrate the Misa de Gallo, tragedy has again struck our beloved country in the typhoon *Urduja*.

The reports are not yet fully in but there are at least over 40 deaths, many are injured, many are still missing and almost 13,000 families reported in evacuation centers as we prepare for Christmas. For sure many families have gone to relatives, neighbors and friends. Landslides and destruction followed in the path of *Urduja*. Many places affected by the six landfalls of the storm have been declared in a state of calamity.

Bicol, Eastern Visayas, Central Visayas, Western Visayas, Mimaropa and the Caraga Region have been affected. From reports, particularly hard hit was the province of Biliran.

With this, there is news of another strong storm brewing off eastern Mindanao threatening to bring more rains ahead of Christmas.

Again, this is another very sad situation for many of our people who will be for sure in difficult circumstances as we usher in and celebrate the birth of our Savior.

Thus, may we enjoin our Catholic faithful and all people of good will to offer our sincere prayers to the Lord to let these people, in his mysterious ways, feel his care and love, his mercy and compassion.

At the same time, we can be with the Lord by extending all we can – our help and assistance to these people.



Many are responding to help the victims. Department of Social Welfare and Development and civic organizations have been rushing food and other needed aid for the victims of typhoon *Urduja*.

May I enjoin all our dioceses and their Social Action Centers and CARITAS offices, and faith and covenanted communities and religious organizations and catholic schools to continue what we have been doing in the past when such tragedies struck. We organize and offer our help and assistance to the people of these areas through the bishops of these places.

This is the least that we can do, and perhaps we can do more through our own creative actions in each local Church.

Again, we can only imagine that these days will be days of “darkness” for these people but we pray that they keep their faith in the Lord firm and strong so that in this darkness they can still gaze and feel the light of Christ.

May we “who trust in the compassion of our Lord,” our light and our salvation, “find solace and relief in his coming.” (Collect, December 24 The Morning Mass).

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