

# FUKUSHIMA-DESK NEWS

2014.7

## Fukushima Block Meeting

Sunday, May 19, a regular meeting of Fukushima Block was held at Nodamachi Catholic Church, where representatives of all the parishes and organizations related to the problems of Fukushima gathered. Based on the talk by Archbishop Takeo Okada, Chairperson of the Bishops' Conference of Japan, entitled "Three years since the Great Earthquake of East Japan," those present shared their own experience and views.

The theme was classified into four main points, each of which the participants experienced valuable sharing. It is hoped that we do not stop here contented with the fruitful sharing, but this experience should flow into concrete involvement. The four main points are as below.

### 1. *The evacuees, the prospect of their future and psychological care*

- 1) Status quo.
- 2) The victims coming from the designated evacuation area.
- 3) The victims unable to evacuate.
- 4) The underprivileged because the compensation ended.
- 5) Those returned from the shelter.
- 6) Way of living; life style.
- 7) General evaluation and wishes for future.

### 2. *Tsunami, cleaning of the debris, tidying of residence*

- 1) Status quo.
- 2) Issues and problems.
- 3) How to face the issues and problems.
- 4) Concrete involvement.

### 3. *Acceptance of volunteers, and effective use of "The Prayer for the Earthquake Victims"*

- 1) Cooperation within the Prefecture.
- 2) Acceptance of volunteers from outside.
- 3) "The Prayer" not being utilized throughout the Church.

### 4. *Appeal for the abolition of Nuclear Power Plants*

- 1) To acquire adequate knowledge on nuclear plants and radiation.
- 2) To listen to the "living voice" of the victims.
- 3) To review our own daily life.
- 4) To establish our life not dependent on atomic power.
- 5) To realize the danger of atomic plants.
- 6) To be linked with people and maintain good relationships.
- 7) To realize the fact that our own life is threatened to be destroyed.
- 8) To pray and communicate.



## The Problem of Death in Solitude

In the issue of May 25 newspaper *Fukushima Mimpo*, there was an article of a 49 year old man who was found dead alone at home. According to the paper, this man used to participate frequently in the weeding and garbage collection of the area and was known to the neighbors. He must have been ill and dead for several days, judging from his condition. This made us think of the importance and the method of periodic checking in on such people.

## The discrimination called

### "the Atomic Plant" -- Voice of Fukushima

From June 9 to 11, I participated in the gathering of "the Fourth National Meeting of Activists for Buraku Liberation in Aizu." The sincere learning attitude of the 170 participants from all over the country overwhelmed me. At the meeting, the recitation of "the Declaration of the Horizontal Thinking Union" was first recited by everybody, followed by the opening prayer. The whole meeting manifested the fact that each person has to be based on the thinking of other persons, reminding us of the early Christians' concept of the Kingdom of God and of the Christian community. During the Scripture Study, the meaning of baptism symbolizing the belonging to the Christian community was focused, reminding us what was being asked of us, who live in Fukushima today. Then there was a time of rich sharing by some victims of the nuclear plant accidents, consisting of a Buddhist priest, a "forced" (obligatory due to the area) refugee, a "voluntary" (independent as he had come from outside) refugee, and a farmer. Each speaker, while reading his/her report, wept with deep emotion rising from the bottom of his/her heart, which moved all the participants.

### Visit to the Temporary Houses

On June 20, those who have been supporting the temporary residence through the Social Activity Committee of Kobe visited the residence of the evacuees from Kawauchi Village. We were glad to give them the necessary information as to how to get to the place.

The visitors first went to Haramachi Base to obtain general information on Minami Soma situation, then they moved on to the temporary

houses in Koriyama, where they listened to the stories of the evacuees from Kawauchi Village. More than half of the residents in the temporary residence are said to be over 80 years old. In the temporary residential area in Koriyama, there was a branch office of Kawauchi Village Office, and even "a day service center". When evacuation was no more compulsory last year, the financial aid from the government also stopped at the same time. The evacuees became so poor that they had to ask Kobe to send them some rice, which showed the severe reality. These temporary houses in the city of Koriyama are built in the midst of a small "residential area" called the Big Pallet. In the center of the area, there is a rather wide street, which divides the people coming from *Kawauchi* and *Tomika*. They say that there is a very clear distinction between those who are restricted to return to their former area, and those who are already permitted to return. We visited two of such, still existing. The words of the chairperson of the residents' association are still ringing in my ears. "Here are people who will remain here indefinitely. They don't know for how many more years. 10 years? 20 years? Some of them will be here for the rest of their lives." He also added, "What we need most are volunteers for *cleaning*. These are elderly people, already living here for three years, and are not strong enough to clean their own dusty fans and air conditioning system. They also need some food ready to be eaten, such as cooked rice, one meal sized canned goods. These words gave us the actual reality. The Christians from Kobe who had been supporting the people in these temporary houses said, "After such a long time, at last we came to see you!" and shed tears. The residents of Kawauchi seemed to be equally moved.

At the end of the visit, everybody sang "Aizu Bandaisan wa..." (a famous old folk song of Fukushima), and the men and women of Kawauchi sang "Kawauchi Kouta" (ode to Kawauchi, praising the beauty of the sea shore village). This finale was especially touching. The chairperson of the residents' association was particularly moved, and said, "Oh, this was really our first experience. I had never dreamed that these people would talk so much. Neither did I not expect them to want to sing Kawauchi Kouta!"



The next day, June 21, we went to meet the visitors from Kobe at Nihon Matsu, where they had stayed that night. We took them to the temporary residence area of Miharu, where the evacuees from Katsurao Village live. Like yesterday, together we listened to their experience. In the temporary residence area of Kaiyama in Miharu, too, the village office of Katsurao is established. The people of this temporary residence area were particularly cheerful. Where did it come from? The Catholics from Kobe and the residents there were interacting and talking so cheerfully, and laughter was heard very often. I do not know what caused it, but one time the Katsurao people started to take down all the handmade decorations hanging from the ceiling one after another, and Kobe people took them in their hands, looking at each of them with admiration. The room which had been gaily decorated before appeared suddenly empty, but peoples' smiling faces superseded the lack of decoration.

## The Number of the Dead and

### Missing Related to Disaster

Based on *Fukushima Minpo News*: Deaths  
connected with disasters continue to happen

	Direct	Related										
	2011	2013.3.11	5/10	6/31	5/15	8/11	9/18	11/12	11/24	1/18	5/11	6/11
Soma	439	21	21	21	21	21	21	25	25	25	25	26
Minamisoma	525	396	409	409	419	428	431	437	437	439	452	452
Hirono	2	31	31	31	31	36	36	37	37	38	38	39
Naraha	11	74	79	79	79	79	79	86	90	95	100	100
Tomioka	18	146	160	167	167	176	176	203	203	215	240	244
Kawauchi	-----	49	49	49	49	49	49	64	64	68	72	72
Ookuma	11	80	83	83	83	97	97	98	98	99	102	103
Futaba	17	90	93	96	96	99	99	99	99	99	99	99
Namie	149	247	264	271	271	271	271	302	306	315	320	329
Katsurao	-----	16	17	17	17	21	21	24	24	24	24	24
Shinchi	100	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	8	8	8	9
Iidate	1	39	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42
Iwaki	293	111	111	111	116	116	116	116	116	116	125	125
Total	1599	1324	1383	1400	1415	1459	1462	1575	1585	1627	1699	1718