

SIXTH REPORT:

A sixth message sent out by Archbishop Adrian Smith sm, Archbishop of Honiara

The situation in the Western Solomons is far from static. It would seem that the threat of more earthquakes and Tsunami has subsided in the Western Solomons, but there is a great hustle of activity.

Caritas Australia under the management of Mr. Adam Elliott who has been here for the past three years helping us is doing a fine job. A second ship has gone to the West. It is not only about bringing things; it is so important that places are visited to let people know they are cared for.

It was great to hear that Bishop Bernard was able to visit some places by helicopter. I am not certain as to where he visited; I think it was to the Shortlands and perhaps to Choisuel. It must be very comforting for him to have been able to go and show his concern.

Relief is reaching the areas in which people have suffered; that it is all happening perfectly is not the case. The very nature of a disaster is that lots of mistakes and oversights will be part of what happens. Miscommunications are the order of the day: that does not take away from the very generous response that is being made to the disaster.

Mr. David Kerr a very close friend of Bishop O'Grady OP has arrived in Gizo. He will be a great support to the Diocese as it tries to get back on its feet. He is a person with very positive management skills; such skills are very much in demand just now.

Mr. Patrick Rasmussen arrived in Gizo today. Patrick brings with him a great resource of counseling skills. He has worked and helped us to form our post ethnic tensions trauma counseling teams. These teams will work with under the direction of Patrick. He will assess the situation and set the trauma counseling teams to work where most needed.

The overall scene is one of a wonderful response both internationally and within Solomon Islands. The arrival in Honiara on Thursday of the World Youth Day Cross and Icon of the Blessed Virgin has been a great event. Over two thousand youth were at the Airport to welcome the WYD Symbols. Without delay the Cross and Icon were on their way to Maliata; where they received an equally enthusiastic reception by the youth. This morning Sunday 15th the Cross and Icon were taken to Gizo by Solomon Airlines. The decision by Bishop Bernard that the Cross and Icon should go to Gizo was one of great faith. I am sure that the Cross and beautiful Icon will help people to put aside their fears and get on with the process of rebuilding their lives.

The road forward for the Western Solomons is a long and demanding one. Perhaps it is true to say that the Headline News items are now over. It will be a great logistical task for

the Diocese of Gizo to rebuild what has to be rebuilt. The spontaneous goodness of so many must be an encouragement to them. When the Cross and Icon arrive at Holy Cross Cathedral, having been carried by youth all the way from the Airport, perhaps a 13 kms journey, as soon as it was set in place in the Cathedral an automatic collection for the suffering victims of the tsunami was initiated. Those who took the Cross and Icon to Gizo, took with them the offerings of the people. The actual amount may not have been so much, but the love and sense of wanting to help is very real.

I leave for Port Moresby tomorrow 16th April to attend our Bishops' Conference Meeting there. I will be away until 27th of April. By then our Tsunami will no longer be news, but the hard work of rebuilding will be a painful reality.

If any one wishes to send funds through Honiara Archdiocese please know that simple bank draft cheques made payable to: The Diocese of Honiara can easily be managed here in Honiara. Please attach to cheques you send clear details of the sender with return addresses so that we can receipt you. If you have any particular use of the funds you want to identify, please do so. I am sure that Bishop O'Grady OP will respect your intentions. If you wish to leave the use of the funds to the discretion of Bishop Bernard, please say so.

At this stage my reports seem to have served their purpose. If your wish further information I will do my best to respond.

Thank you for putting up with me until now.

May all that is beautiful about Easter be with you all.

In Christ,

Adrian Smith sm