

Bishop Visit Sisters Serving in Sichuan

"The most urgent task is the rebuilding of the spirit and psychological health so that those living in the shattered remains of their homes and cities can move through the shadow of the disaster as soon as possible," **Bishop Li Liangui, from Cangzhou diocese said on May 23**, after visiting sisters working on the front line of the earthquake relief effort in Sichuan province, China.

Bishop Li said that the general atmosphere in the disaster-stricken area is not on the edge of despair. "The care and warmth generated, as family members provide compassion and help for one another is remarkable," he told Faith press. "Generally, survivors have been well cared for by the volunteers and officials working on the spot." The bishop called it "a moving sight."

Li said that reconstruction is obviously a long-term project. However, he added **that psychological care is the most pressing demand of the moment**. "Property lost during the earthquake can be replaced, but the mental injury inflicted upon the victims will be tremendous. The rebuilding of lives should be given recognition and assistance," he said.

The bishop said that it was touching to see the positive reaction of the people to the sisters who have volunteered to work at the front lines. "When I saw the victims pouring out their worries and pains to the sisters who were serving them, I realized that rebuilding the spirit through the comfort of religion does indeed have great potential," he shared.

Bishop Li said that although it is too early to make any concrete plans, he thinks that one group of people who will be in great need will be those suffering from physical or mental disabilities. "I think the Church can help in their care," he said. "We can establish kindergartens and homes to care for them." He added that another group may well be the aged, who have lost their grown up children who had provided for them and given them a place to live.

One sister on the frontline explained that it really is hard work. A qualified nurse, she said she has been responsible for organizing teams of people to disinfect areas, as mosquitoes, rats and other vermin are proving to be a danger to health. "Along the way I can give medical help and advice to many people," she commented, "but most of all, people need comforting."

The sister confessed that she has not washed for over a week. "Water is the most precious commodity," she remarked. "We cannot waste it on washing!" She explained that the only safe water available is what is being distributed by aid and government agencies in bottles and it is needed for cooking and drinking.

Bishop Li concluded that the horrors of the earthquake have shaken the world, but **the response in terms of good will and relief being offered has superseded the boundaries of faith, nationality, country or race**. He added that "the Church, as a community of love, should endeavor to take an active part in the rescue and relief works, as part of our common journey of love."