

April 26, 2015

Message about School Sisters of Notre Dame from Nepal

The three sisters in Bandipur rested through the night on Saturday without incident. We had made an escape plan in case more tremors occurred. There were a few very mild shocks so we stayed indoors. Many in the village stayed outside much of the night. Some families who lost their homes sheltered in part of our preschool overnight.

The Municipality is providing meals for those 23 households whose homes were destroyed in Bandipur. This will probably go on for several days. Relief in the form of tents is also promised.

Sister Miriam had just arrived by bus at the outskirts of Kathmandu when the quake occurred. She had gone to complete the purchase of books for our students. The bus eventually reached a bus park but couldn't proceed any further. Miriam and a male Japanese volunteer teacher from Kyoto who had gone with her had to walk about one hour to get to St. Xavier's. They are safe there for now but would like to return to Bandipur. Businesses have shut down of course, so she was unable to get the books. A bridge outside Kathmandu collapsed after Miriam got to Kathmandu, and we are told there is a huge traffic jam there in both directions. We are not sure how or when we can get Miriam back to Bandipur.

This morning (Sunday) electricity, cell phones, and Internet became available in Bandipur and other parts of the country. Water is still not being pumped from the reservoir, but we hope that water too will also soon be available. Electricity comes and goes, but that is typical for Nepal.

Gorkha, near the epicenter about 40 miles to our north, is reported to have been 80% destroyed. We can't get good information because news reports are mostly from survivors talking by phone. It will be some time before we get clear details about villages along the fault line.

The government has declared a five day break for schools and offices. Sister Evangela has decided to follow that plan. Perhaps soon we will have more clarity about how to move forward. Obviously, some areas in the country could function normally while other places are in chaos and devastation.

Our buildings are all OK. Our hostels have only class 12 students right now. Class 11 students were on a break after final exams and before preparation for Board Tests. We have advised students to stay where they are for the time being. I expect the Class 12 Board Tests scheduled to begin May 3 across the country will be postponed since a huge number of students were to be tested in Kathmandu and other affected areas.

The news services are showing the massive destruction and the terrible losses this poor country has suffered. Many in Nepal are just beginning to realize the enormity of what has happened. We are grateful that our school and village have suffered little in the devastation and know that sisters and many others across the world are holding Nepal in prayer. Thank you.

Regards,

Barb Soete, SSND
(For Bandipur Community)