

April 29, 2015

**Message about School Sisters of Notre Dame from Nepal**

Hooray! Sister Miriam returned to Bandipur Tuesday about 6:00 PM. Although she was not able to get the student books, she got some cash from the bank. She had tried to get a bus on Monday but was unsuccessful. On Tuesday she hired a car (a taxi driver she knows well) to take her to the bank and then on to Bandipur.

The St. Xavier School grounds are being used as a tent city for the homeless or those afraid to enter their houses. St. Xavier's is one of about ten sites in Kathmandu designated by the government for relief assistance. Our volunteer teacher from Notre Dame Elementary in Kyoto had seen some of the major cultural sites in Kathmandu when he toured with a group from Japan about a year ago. He returned from a walking tour of the central city in shock at the destruction. He had not been prepared by Internet pictures and reports because Kathmandu had been without electricity since his arrival with the earthquake on Saturday.

Bandipur is returning to normal. Shops are open and more people are sleeping indoors. A district official toured the area where many homes were destroyed and promised to provide 2800 rupees (28 dollars at the present exchange rate) per person for immediate food needs. The people whose homes were lost are among the poorest in the area and are now without their day-labor jobs.

School for Nursery through Class 10 (about 760 students) is scheduled to resume Tuesday, May 5. The school year had barely started when the earthquake occurred. We sent our class 12 students home for the time being because we have no idea when the Higher Secondary Education Board will reschedule the national tests. Testing hundreds of thousands of students across the country is a logistical challenge in normal times. It is hard to imagine how the board will manage now.

Our preschool, Seto Gurans, will also reopen soon for the children in that area who can get there. Seto Gurans is undamaged and is located in the hardest hit area of the village. Preschool children who are not from the area would have to travel through huge debris fields to get to school. Sister Miriam is planning to open two temporary sites for the other preschool children. We are in a process to evaluate how we can provide the best assistance to the homeless families.

We continue to monitor the news on the Internet as does most of the world. We have had a regular supply of electricity and water in Bandipur. I am not sure that cooking gas will continue to be available here or across the country. We continue to pray that the emergency relief will be sufficient and timely for those suffering in the aftermath of the quake. Disease, starvation, and limited medical help for the injured as well as inaccessibility of remote areas remain critical concerns.

We are grateful for the prayers and good wishes from sisters and others.

Regards and thanks,

Barb Soete  
(for the Bandipur Community)