

Saturday 9/26/09 report from Jaime Julian of Christian Mission in the Far East:

As of today, around 280,000 affected by Tropical Storm ONDOY [KETSANA] International name. We got one-month rainfall in 6 hours. At least 50 people reported dead and undetermined number are missing. ONDOY bring massive flooding. People still trapped on roofs waiting to be rescued. We are in the state of Calamity here in the Capital Region and 25 Areas of Central and Northern Luzon.

Many of our things are badly damaged including our Refrigerator. We will appreciate so much any help you can extend to us and to our people.

Monday 9/28/09 Report:

Thanks for your concern. As of today death toll is already 140 while 32 others remain missing. Around 3 billion pesos estimated damage in the Capital Region alone. Classes in all levels still suspended. Many of the places still no supply of water and electricity. Many of the highways remain submerged in floodwaters filled with debris hampering the delivery of relief goods. Our President is now appealing to the International Community for help due to severe damage brought by the wrath of Tropical Storm ONDOY.

Thank God! my family are all safe. Only some of our belongings were badly damage. Cleaning the house is so difficult due to a limited supply of water.

Again, thank you for your help and your concern.

Friday 10/2/09 report:

At least 20 Typhoons or Tropical Storms pass by our country each year, but up to now every typhoon that hits the land, strong or weak, still catches the government unprepared and unable to act promptly. Tropical Ondoy or Ketsana just underscored this point even more.

In this latest disaster considered the worst in 40 years. The equipment were few and far between and relief too little and too late. In fact, up to now some victims remain stranded and living under precarious and inhuman conditions, while others have not been provided any relief. No one knew or expected that typhoon ONDOY would cause such havoc on us. We were completely unprepared, and left shocked beyond our belief.

It was just signal no 1, and we've definitely had stronger typhoon before. But even without the crazy winds, people were stuck in their cars on the road for hours, stranded in Malls, wading in waste-deep water and scrambling onto their roofs for safety. I was overwhelmed by the updates that happened by seconds. I was beyond shocked when I saw familiar places transformed into a river of floodwaters. Malls need to opened overnight to accommodate the trapped shoppers, names of people who were missing, addresses and locations of those who needed to be rescued.

People everywhere else had already lost everything-their families, their possessions, their homes, their lives.

In our case, we need to stay at the second floor while water on the ground floor continue to rise. We didn't have time to secure our belongings. Twelve among our churches were affected. We have fear for the possibility of a second storm disaster because of the reported arrival of another super typhoon Parma.

The devastation wrought by Tropical storm ONDOY has triggered an outpouring sympathy from all over the nation where Filipinos have donated to the relief effort in cash or in kind. Despite our poverty we can still help others in whatever little way we can.

ONDOY has shown that Filipinos can cope with emergencies much better when they do not rely too much or simply do not rely at all on government.

In any case, what we really need to do is to continue to help, not just donating but going out to poorer community listening and sharing the gospel.

Thanks for your prayer,  
Jaime