

Caritas Philippines appeals for aid to help in recovery from super typhoon

MANILA, Philippines (CNS) – The Catholic Church’s humanitarian aid arm and a Jesuit university appealed for aid to help in recovery efforts after Super Typhoon Goni struck the Philippines.

Caritas Philippines and the president of Ateneo de Naga University sought aid from domestic and international sources in response to the strongest storm this year that killed at least 20 people and sparked mudslides that buried hundreds of homes.

Many of the homes were near Mayon Volcano in Albay province.

The typhoon also forced about 390,000 people to seek shelter at evacuation centers, many of whom have yet to return to their homes.

Caritas Philippines also sought aid from the parent Caritas Internationalis in Rome, which is headed by Manila’s former archbishop, Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle.

“Initial help would be to provide food, water and emergency shelter to people in the evacuation centers,” Bishop Colin Bagaforo of Kidapawan, secretary of Caritas Philippines, said in a statement.

The storm brought “greater poverty” to communities that were suffering from job layoffs in metro Manila caused by the coronavirus, he said.

Father Anton Pascual, executive director of Caritas Manila, said Virac, Daet and Legazpi dioceses on Luzon island would receive \$4,000 each from the agency.

Jesuit Father Roberto Rivera, president of Ateneo de Naga University, also appealed for donations from alumni and friends. He said the university and its church sustained damage from flooding and strong winds.

“The big wooden doors of our university church were torn off their hinges, windows in several buildings were totally smashed in, metal gutters and solar panels were blown off. Several of the oldest and biggest trees on campus were uprooted, but miraculously none of them hit adjacent buildings,” Father Rivera said.

Aside from material donations, Father Rivera said the school community needed prayers as people work to return to normal.

“We realize the resources of all are strained given the pandemic crisis, but a number of you are already thoughtfully asking how to send help ... Please be assured that whatever resources we collect will be channeled to the neediest,” he said in his appeal.

Bishop Jose Alan Dialogo of Sorsogon said his office was open to receive donations for typhoon victims in nearby provinces.