

Disaster Preparedness and Relief work in Vanua Levu

In Partnership with Caritas Archdiocese of Suva and JPIC.

The Columban Society has for many decades included Justice, Peace and integrity of Creation as integral to its identity and mission. We recognize that there are many ways to live Columban JPIC which moves us towards a more holistic and integrated approach.

Guided by this understanding of interconnectedness and the society's vision as presented in "Called to Communion", the JPIC team is working to mirror this interconnectedness and spirit of communion in how we understand our priority issues, the approach to our work and how we relate to one another on the local, national, regional and global level of the Church and all her networks and partners.

On the Synodality of the whole Catholic church, it calls us to Communion, Participation, and Mission and this is why we are all working together with the Caritas Archdiocese team for the relief effort of the past TC Yasa cyclone and also in preparation for any upcoming ones as we are already in the Cyclone season.

I am very thankful to the Mission Office for the support which enables me to carry out this work and also to the Caritas Archdiocese of Suva for all the assistance to the affected families and communities throughout Fiji. A big Vinaka Vakalevu to the all the Parish Priests the PPCs in the 5 parishes on Vanua Levu for the hospitality and team work for which without this work would be impossible.

These collaborations have been really made lasting impacts on the lives of those who have been assisted and have made their Christmas a little bit better and brighter.



At the Holy Family parish with parish priest Fr Carlos. Was very helpful in the disaster container relocation to Nabala parish.

We had an initial briefing session with Fr Carlos at our quarters...at the Friendly North Inn. He invited me to come and attend their PPC meeting at the church and to do some introductions to all the community leaders and Commission reps. This was a great opportunity to introduce JPIC and its core functions and how we can work together.



At the PPC meeting in Holy Family where I was asked to come and do a Talanoa session with the committee and to also formally present our I Sevusevu.



Presentation of our Sevusevu to Fr Carlos and Parish Chairman.



Talanoa & Discussion session with the Labasa committee and sharing with them what JPIC is about. There is a need for further awareness and training which they will inform us of the schedule. Issues are urgent and real and that is why coordinated support and community-based action is needed.



Disaster container relocation from Holy Family- Labasa to Our lady of the Holy Rosary – Nabala.

This was one of the most challenging tasks to move the 3 tons steel marine container from the congested space in front of the presbytery. There was no suitable forklift available to lift it, so we have to drag it out using pine posts as rollers. The side lifter truck has to be brought in from Suva to lift it, transport and safely offload at Nabala.



The reason for this relocation is that Labasa is already vulnerable to flooding and it makes no sense to position this container here which will be stored with WASH Kits for emergency for the Northern division as it will be underwater. Furthermore, there is very little space for disaster operation and the container is taking up a lot of the front yard. For overall safety and health conditions for vehicle, people and for the general public, the best option is to relocate this container to Nabala. Nevertheless, thanking Holy Family for looking after it for the past years and all the services it has done.... Vinaka Vakalevu.

Moving the container with the forklift dragging it out using roller platform.



Side lifter operations. Lift, load and transport to Nabala.



Thanking the Labasa team with Fr Carlos who was with us all the way.

Our lady of the Holy Rosary – Nabala



Well, what a great combination. From a Columban parish to another... from the Holy Family to Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Herself. This picture which I just casually took have so much of God's wonderful Glory being manifested. The clouds above the Grotto of our Lady seems to form a crown. I never noticed it on my phone until I put it on this report since now, I can see the enlarged picture.

Call it what you may, but for me I'm ever grateful for our Lady's help, protection and comfort especially during disasters. Comfort to the afflicted and the strength to those who carry out the work of assistance.

Nabala now Disaster Operation center for the North.

Offloading at Nabala parish with their parish priest- Fr Manasa and our team. He was very delighted to assist in this disaster preparation and offered his full support. He even offered the use of the old church sacristy to be used as additional storage space as this 20 ft container could not contain all the \$84,000.00 worth of Wash Kits purchased from RB Patel supermarket in Labasa.



Further assistance to Nabala.

A brand new 288 Husqvarna chainsaw was given to Fr Manasa as part of the disaster tool that will be used for tree clearance, agriculture and for cutting timber for house rehabilitation after a cyclone. This was their request after cyclone Yasa earlier this year.



This type of tool too is mainly used in frontline operations for cyclones, and which is so useful in these communities.

A chainsaw can prepare the timber for a whole village, church, community hall or school when in trained hands. It is portable, durable and affordable when repairs are needed.

Sign of mutual cooperation, appreciation and friendship.

During this session, Fr Manasa asked us to be part of their AGM and to do a little presentation.

Semi to speak on Caritas and Disaster Management while I speak on JPIC and what it does. Even during our grog session, I was able to capture the attention of those who were in our company as I do my awareness through Talanoa and dialogue.

The third longest reef on earth runs the length of Vanua Levu right up to the Yasawa Islands and this reef is on the front yard of Nabala parish called the “BainiVualiku” meaning the Wall of the North.

When I started relating this to Climate Change and Environmental Injustice that already on Vanua Levu and others that are looming up, it caught the attention of everyone including Fr Manasa. That was how he asked for us to speak at their AGM.

Awareness and training is definitely needed and our JPIC and Columban perspectives is something that we can provide.



To be continued ...