

Thank you very much for your concern and interest in what is happening to us. In fact, I had never felt such strong earthquake ground motion, since 1985 when I was in Peru, in a meeting with the Provincials of North and South America. They say this was much stronger. There was much damage in the southern city of Concepcion, which was badly damaged and people around it as in the port of Talcahuano, the village of San Pedro, and others which are almost leveled. The same in the city of Talca and the peoples of Juan Fernandez Island which disappeared from the map by the tsunami, the dead approaching 200 and I think it will be many more. In Santiago, some buildings suffered heavy damage, especially in the communes of Cerro Navia, Lo Prado, Pudahuel, Maipú; the apartment buildings of 15 or 21 stories where poor people live were badly damaged, people are afraid and sleep in the squares; other old houses have been damaged on the inside; have had to demolish near where the CEFOSO¹ is located, there are several that were damaged inside, 60 feet from our Center they are removing the ruins; there is the wall outside (thank goodness no rain or the tragedy would be much bigger and larger).

We work with 260 families that are below the poverty level, I have asked social workers to visit them to quantify the damage they sustained to their homes; many of them are close to us. The damage done by the earthquake is a huge problem, not something that the Government, I believe, is able to fix in a short time. I feel it is doing its best, but the effort and the staff are not adequate to fix the damage in a short time. Whole villages have been without power or water (we have Electricity only today at CEFOSO, so I have not been able to answer your mail before); many organized criminals have attacked supermarkets, pharmacies, and even people, who have had and have to defend themselves. This also is happening in Santiago. The President, in view of all this, has had to declare curfews in Concepción and Talca, and the military has taken over security in those regions. Today we need much help from the solidarity organizations; from Santiago on to the South people need much help. The Oblates have suffered no harm in our properties, homes and people except for some minimum damage in the Provincial House.

¹ CEFOSO is the Center that the author, Brother Oscar Gonzales, directs.