Caritas Japan

Our Perspective and Reflection of Integral Ecology

TOGETHER WE

ともに
Integral Ecology

- Everything is closely interrelated
- Environmental issues are both social and human
- The intimate relationship between the poor and the fragility of the planet

Based on the above:

Our perspective of Integral Ecology is that life, the environment, and peace are all connected as one.

We would like to mention the accident at the Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant in Fukushima of the Great East Japan Earthquake, its aftermath and our perspective and approach to integral ecology from there.
When we talk about integral ecology and its practices in Japan, we have to talk about the Fukushima nuclear accident and the accompanying support activities of victims or survivors' families and local communities that were torn apart by the March 11, 2011 the Great East Japan Earthquake.

Through these support activities such as psychological care and cuddling of the victims, accepting evacuees, taking care of children in the affected areas for summer vacation, supporting the increased number of survivors of domestic violence, supporting the elderly living alone, gatekeepers to prevent an increase in suicides, etc, many volunteers shared the attitude of “living together” from their own standpoints.

Pope Francis visited Japan in 2019, and what he said at the gathering with the victims of triple disaster gave courage and inspiration to many people and gave them suggestions on how to live in the future.

Many of the volunteers returned to their parishes and participate in support activities for the vulnerable people such as foreigners living as technical intern trainees, the elderly living alone, the disabled, women and children. Also the Catholic schools that volunteered has begun to address environmental issues such as plastic-free campuses, incorporating "Laudato Si" into religion, social studies, and integrated learning classes, etc..

In this way, in Japan, we would like to tell you that many people think about the integral ecology in “Laudato Si’ “and the community of care in the “Fratelli Tutti” and challenge ourselves to put it into practice in our own communities.

We believe that this TOGETHER WE campaign is an opportunity to encourage these movements to return to the perspective of "Integral Ecology" again, to see them as common values, and to link them together.
Caritas Minamisouma

March 11 2011: The Great East Japan Earthquake

June 2012: Caritas Minamisouma (former Haramachi Base) was in order to receive volunteers from all over Japan to support those affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake and the subsequent the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant accident.
Caritas Minamisouma (from June 2012)

VISION

- Live together with people in difficult circumstances due to the Great East Japan Earthquake and the nuclear power plant accident, we aim for a society where the dignity of all people is respected.
- As a place located 25 km from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, we connect the reality of Fukushima and the thoughts of the people living there to the world.
- Respect the global environment and aim for coexistence with nature

MISSION

- Work with local people to re-create the local community
- Learn, pray together, and communicate about the severe situation in Fukushima brought about by the nuclear accident, changes in the daily life of the community, and the preciousness of life
- Review our daily lives to realize a lifestyle of living in harmony with nature
ACTIVITIES

- Cooperation with social cooperatives and related organizations in Minamisoma City and other area of Fukushima Prefecture
- Permanent salon using a multipurpose hall
- Cooperation with Haramachi Catholic Church
- Support for children and women (childcare assistance and family support assistance)
- Creating opportunities to connect people inside and outside the community
- Local guidance
- Transmission and sharing of information about Minamisoma City and the other area of Fukushima Prefecture

April 2019：reorganized as a general incorporated association
- dispatched volunteers, supplied relief supplies, and assisted in soup in the areas affected by the "torrential rain disaster" caused by Typhoon No. 19.
- Covid-19 “Support for needy”
  - Support for foreign workers (technical intern trainees)
  - Family support for single-parent families and children in need
Total approximate number of volunteer participants (2011-2022) 31,000
Number of average weekly volunteer participation (2019-2021) 100-170 per week

2019 visiting groups—as an example
- Bridge for Peace (Youth from Israel and Palestine)
- Cardinal Manyo Maeda with Osaka Diocesan group
- Congregation for Women, General Superiors General (Lifelong Formation Committee) “Fukushima - Journey of Life”
- Ottawa Congregation Sennio Group (Sendai, Shiogama)
- Akita Seirei Gakuen (Catholic highschool in Akita)
- Tokyo Catholic Theological Seminary
- Japan Catholic Nursing Association Nagoya Branch
- Sendai Diocese Akene no Sei Kai
- Sisters of the Sacred Heart
- Osaka-Kishiwada Group
- Society of Aid and Assistance of Mary (general director and officers)
- Priests of the Anglican
  and other catholic high-school or universities students
Initiatives for sustainable lives

• As part of its commitment to sustainable lives, the company operated the Caritas Farm. Efforts were also made to actively utilize renewable energy sources.

• Food harvested from the Caritas Farm is used in meal provision projects and kindergarten lunches. The field is provided to kindergarten students for their potato harvesting experience.
COVID-19  Support for needy

There are about 250 foreigners working in Minamisoma as technical intern trainees. They continue to have a difficult life in Japan due to the Covid-19.

• Providing them with food aid of rice, food and commodities.
• Communicating and supporting...
Apostolic Journey to Japan
Meeting with the victims of Triple Disaster

– 2011.3.11 the earthquake, the tsunami and the nuclear accident –

Pope Francis visited Japan in 2019, and what he said at the gathering with the victims of triple disaster gave courage and inspiration to many people and gave them suggestions on how to live in the future.

His Holiness speech, from an integral ecology-based perspective, promoted the building of a community of care and a culture of care in Japan.

The gathering was based on an interactive format, with three witnesses from Fukushima sharing their experiences and thoughts, followed by a speech by Pope Francis.

Tokuun asked how we can respond to other major issues we face: wars, refugees, food, economic disparities and environmental challenges. These, as you well know, cannot be understood or treated separately. It is a serious mistake to think that nowadays these issues can be dealt with in isolation, without viewing them as part of a much larger network. He rightly pointed out that we are part of this earth, part of the environment, inasmuch as everything is, in the end, interconnected.

Tokun Tanaka, who was the chief priest of Kodakayama Dokeiji Temple in Minamisoma, Fukushima Prefecture (17 km from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant and 4 km from the coastline). In his speech, he proposed the following: We are now being questioned about how we live. From growth to maturity. Be a part of the change.

Photo: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/events/event.dir.html/content/vaticanevents/en/2019/11/25/vittime-tokyo.html
we must choose a humble and sober way of life
the need to find a new path for the future, a path rooted in respect for each person and in respect for the natural world

As we think about the future of our common home, we need to realize that we cannot make purely selfish decisions, and that we have a great responsibility to future generations. Consequently, we must choose a humble and sober way of life that recognizes the urgent realities we are called to face. Toshiko, Tokuun and Matsuki have each reminded us of the need to find a new path for the future, a path rooted in respect for each person and in respect for the natural world. Along this path, “all of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents” (LS 14).

Matsuki Kamoshita
When he was eight years old, a nuclear accident occurred evacuated to Tokyo to escape radiation exposure with his mother and 3 year-old little brother. His father remained in Fukushima for his job as a teacher. His mother continued to evacuate with them, moving from one unfamiliar place to another. He was bullied at the evacuation site and spent many painful days, even to the point of wanting to die. Eventually, his father's body and mind fell apart, and he was unable to continue working. Still, he says he is still happy that he was able to evacuate.

Photo: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/events/event.dir.html/content/vaticanevents/en/2019/11/25/vittime-tokyo.html
many hands must join together and many hearts unite as one
many people actively and effectively share their sorrow and continue to extend a fraternal helping hand

Dear friends, in the ongoing work of recovery and rebuilding after the triple disaster, many hands must join together and many hearts unite as one. In this way, those who are suffering will be supported and know that they have not been forgotten. They will realize that many people actively and effectively share their sorrow and continue to extend a fraternal helping hand. Once again, I thank all those who, in ways large and small, have tried to ease the burdens of the victims. May that compassion be the path that enables all to find hope, stability and security for the future.

Photo: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/events/event.dir.html/content/vaticanevents/en/2019/11/25/vittime-tokyo.html
Many of the volunteers with the survivors or victims of the Great East Japan Earthquake returned to their parishes to participate in support activities for the vulnerable people such as foreigners living in Japan, technical intern trainees, the elderly living alone, the disabled, women and children.

In many of the Catholic schools where volunteered in Fukushima have begun to address environmental issues such as plastic-free campuses, incorporating "Laudato Si" into religion, social studies, and integrated learning classes, etc. have begun.

The relief activities following the Great East Japan Earthquake taught us that we humans are part of nature, and that it is important to "support each other" and create a responsible society for the next generation, transcending our position as both victims and supporters. Once again, we believe that integral ecology means to see life, the environment, and peace are all connected one, And through the campaign, we would like to strive to build "community of care" and spread the culture of care.
The Bishops’ Conference decided to promote the TW campaign in General Assembly in July.

As part of the campaign, Caritas is uploading LS and FT texts daily during the “Month for Protecting All Life” from September 1 to October 4. These texts were selected from the public.

Caritas Japan Facebook: https://ja-jp.facebook.com/caritasjapan/

Caritas Japan Campaign Awareness Video: https://youtu.be/u6Qah-aGG7g