

Rice Distribution to 14,000 Families in Marikina City, Philippines

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
Saturday, 16 July 2011 09:24



Touched by the generosity and kindness shown by the members of Tzu Chi Foundation, Philippines last July 3 during the 2011 Prayer Vigil and Rice Relief Program which benefited an estimated 14,000 poor families in Marikina City, Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Juliano-Soliman vowed to provide more support for the Buddhist organization in its various charity works nationwide.

Adding to the DSWD chief's high esteem and admiration to the Tzu Chi volunteers led by Tzu Chi Philippines chief executive officer Alfredo Li is the fact that before the distribution program, a short yet heartfelt prayer was offered by all walks of faith from Catholic, Muslim and Buddhist.

In the prayer, everyone wished for peace, understanding and love for all humankind aside from freedom from further natural and man-made calamities. A grand total of 600 Filipino volunteers and 276 Chinese volunteers of the foundation participated in the proceedings which started 4pm and ended 10:30pm. As this develops, Soliman also reiterated her agency's willingness to shoulder the tax and import duties of the additional 1,000 tons of rice, donated by Taiwan's Agriculture and Food Agency at Tzu Chi Foundation's request, to the Philippines.



She also stressed that the warehouse of the DSWD's National Resource Operations Center is always open to Tzu Chi. "The DSWD is very happy and honored to take part in this project where a lot of our poor countrymen will benefit from the love coming from Taiwan," Soliman emphasized.

She also added that the 20-kilogram sack of rice given to each of the 14,000 families is definitely a big help as many of the residents of Marikina are still reeling from the floods triggered by Tropical Storm "Falcon" (international codename Meari) recently.

"We at the DSWD are expressing our thanks to all the volunteers of the Tzu Chi Foundation, most especially [Master Cheng Yen](#), the founder of the Tzu Chi foundation, for making this generous and loving program a reality," Soliman emphasized.



The DSWD chief's observations were echoed by Marikina Mayor Del De Guzman who was also present together with Marikina Second District Rep. Romero Federico "Miro" Quimbo when Tzu Chi Philippines conducted its rice relief program at the Marikina Sports Center on that day.

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De Guzman, in an interview, expressed his appreciation to the said program of the foundation by wishing more good health and long life to Master Cheng Yen. He also expressed hope that Tzu Chi will remain committed in helping Marikina in its various livelihood and training programs which the latter instituted during the aftermath of Typhoon "Ondoy" (international codename Ketsana) in 2009.

Tzu Chi's rice relief program at the Marikina Sports Center was attended by around 15,000 people with 14,000 coming as beneficiaries. Majority of the families came from the marginalized communities of Nangka, Tumana, and Malanday in Marikina. Beneficiaries were selected following a two-week screening and home visits conducted by Tzu Chi volunteers themselves.

