

Account by Ariel Lim, National Coordinator of the Pagan Federation International – Philippines
(with limited editing)

I've seen from the news about how strong the typhoon is. I was personally afraid for my family but was ready for it. I prepared our house, repaired some areas that needed repair and sealed some leaks. I also secured my plants and prepared food and water just in case. I also instructed my family members on what to do It was forecasted that we would have signal number 4 in our area.

A friend of mine also asked if he and his family could stay at my house during the typhoon because his house is very near the beach. So I took them in. Hours before the typhoon, I went into a deep meditation focused on protecting the house and the neighborhoods. My wife and I also prayed to the gods to protect us and minimize the damage. When the typhoon came, it blew so hard that trees in the neighborhoods were knocked down. There were strong winds. Lucky for our area we did not get that much damage.

We are located on top of a hill and I was afraid of what the typhoon might cause us. However we were not affected much. When I came down the morning the typhoon was gone, everything seemed untouched with very minimal damage. But our power was cut and no internet connection. Cell phone was out. In 2 days it was back. I immediately contacted my PFI members for updates on their situations and I was glad everyone was ok.

I was thinking everyone was fine until I saw the news on TV about the devastation in Northern Cebu and Leyte and Samar. I contacted a Wiccan friend who I remembered was from Northern Cebu. He narrated to me [his story] and gave me pictures of what happened to their place. I was so shocked how devastated their place was. He told me they needed food, water and medicine.... They had already tried to build a temporary shelter so we didn't have to worry. I was glad he was fine.

PFI immediately organized a relief operation and started to contact people to help. Luckily Haduraw Cafe also helped and allowed us to use their facility for storage of goods. PFI got many donations from the international group and friends in the other part of the globe. I think there has been a lot of help coming in already from different parts of the world through Red Cross and different NGO groups. However, I do think it is best for us to hand it personally to the victims because some [big NGOs] just don't reach the victims... That's why PFI team wanted to personally organize the mission and personally hand down the goods to the victims.

I think the help we could give the victims is an immediate help while the government is still ironing out its procedures. We are going to do this continuously - provide the victims and evacuees foods and water supplies - while they are not yet sufficiently supporting themselves. The best way we can help is make sure they can eat every day until they are ready to be on their own.

My greatest concern was an immediate relief to these people. Looking at the news...it pierced my heart and I wanted to do something about it. Thus our team decided to do a relief operation.
