



## Catholic Charities Social Concerns

Dear Friend in Christ,

Happy Easter! Christ has Risen! Alleluia!

Though I am joyful during this Easter Season, my heart is also saddened after hearing of the devastating, senseless violence that took place in Sri Lanka on Easter morning in more than seven locations that included Catholic churches, Catholic shrines and hotels.

If you remember, Sri Lanka was one of our CRS Rice Bowl featured countries this Lenten season. I will admit, prior to learning which countries would be featured during Lent, I had never really known much about Sri Lanka. CRS chose to feature them to highlight the people's beautiful resilience through a CRS-sponsored program that is helping Sri Lanka refugees (most of whom fled to India) find sustainability after they returned home following a long civil war that ended in 2009.



It was during Lent that I had the privilege of meeting and sharing lunch with one of our CRS staff members, **Sajith Silva**, who serves as our CRS Executive Program Officer in Sri Lanka. Sajith was visiting the U.S. as part of our CRS Rice Bowl Lenten Speakers Tour. It was during our encounter that he spoke of the extreme beauty of the people and the landscape of Sri Lanka, but he also conveyed to me the devastation the past civil war has brought to his country. It has been a long rebuilding process, but I couldn't mistake the pride I heard in his voice when he spoke of the resilience of the people of Sri Lanka.

It was no accident that CRS chose the Catholic Social Teaching theme of Call to Family, Community and Participation to feature the work that was being accomplished through the people of Sri Lanka and the Catholic Church. Sajith emphasized to me that the people of Sri Lanka are a peaceful people who live very simply. It is one of the poorest countries in that region, and many of the residents rely on agriculture for their livelihood. Sajith went on to say that although

a vast majority of people are low income, there is no mistaking the beautiful call to family and hospitality that people will witness immediately when visiting Sri Lanka.

Though there are many news stories that provide the facts and eye witness accounts of the devastation, I wanted to share with you an email that Sajith sent to our CRS staff in the U.S. to reassure us that he, his family and fellow CRS/Caritas (Catholic Charities) staff were safe.

*“Dear Friends,*

*With a sad note that I convey what we are going through because of the Easter Sunday Bombing in Sri Lanka.*

*One of the bombs took place in Negombo the parish church where my sister and her family go. However last Sunday they decided to go to down south and thank God, they are safe. In fact My family was also there attending the church mass previous week at that Negombo St. Sebastian’s church.*

*None of our Caritas staff is hurt, however our hearts are crying. Thank you very much for your messages of condolence.*

*Right now, Caritas Sri Lanka is working tirelessly to assist people affected by this tragedy with the help of the local churches.*

*Please keep praying for us and for our country.”*

**SAJITH SILVA** | Executive Programme Officer  
133, Kynsey Road, Colombo 8, Sri Lanka | [www.crs.org](http://www.crs.org)

It is during such times of tragedy that I often receive emails or calls from individuals who want to know what they can do to help. If you too would like to assist our brothers and sisters in Sri Lanka, below are three tangible ways.

- 1) Pray! Pray! Pray! As Sajith mentioned at the end of his email, “Please keep praying for us and for our country.” God does not waste a single prayer. It is through prayer that all of us become Ambassadors of Hope!
  
- 2) Continue to educate yourself on the humanitarian work of our Catholic Church as we uplift the dignity of all people around the world. Consider becoming an **Archdiocesan Global Solidarity Ambassador** for your parish. Ambassadors help educate others within their community on the work of hope that is taking place by CRS and our Catholic partners around the world. They also provide the parish community with tangible ways to support our global brothers and sisters in need. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Marilyn Ross at [mross@archindy.org](mailto:mross@archindy.org) or 317-236-7326
  
- 3) Consider giving financially to CRS who is on the ground in Sri Lanka working with the local Catholic Church and the local Caritas of Sri Lanka.

### **[CRS Online Donation](#)**

("Special Request" section, Sri Lanka Relief)

or

**Catholic Relief Services**  
**PO Box 17090**  
**Baltimore, MD 21297-0303**  
**Memo Line: Sri Lanka Relief**

Sadly, we hear so much about senseless violence around the world that after a while we may have the temptation to become numb to it. That is why I am so thankful for my encounter with Sajith. It is through simple encounters, through listening, and seeing through the eyes of another that our brothers and sisters become people who have dignity, instead of nameless faces. Sajith brought the people of Sri Lanka to me and for that I am very grateful.

Thank you for your continued prayers for peace in our world.

Sincerely in Christ,

*Theresa Chamblee*

Catholic Charities - Director of Social Concerns

[Visit our Website - Catholic Charities - Social Concerns](#)

## Pope Francis' Prayer for Peace & Protection from Violence & from Terrorism

O almighty and merciful God, Lord of the universe and of history. All that You have created is good and your compassion for the mistakes of mankind knows no limits.

We come to You today to ask You to keep in peace the world and its people, to keep far away from it the devastating wave of terrorism, to restore friendship and instill in the hearts of your creatures the gift of trust and of readiness to forgive.

O Giver of life, we pray to You also for all those who have died as victims of brutal terrorist attacks. Grant them their eternal reward. May they intercede for the world that is torn apart by conflicts and disagreements.

O Jesus, Prince of Peace, we pray to You for the ones who have been wounded in these acts of inhuman violence: children and young people, old people and innocent people accidentally involved in evil. Heal their bodies and hearts; console them with Your strength and, at the same time, take away any hatred and a desire for revenge.

Holy Spirit Consoler, visit the families of the victims of terrorism, families that suffer through no fault of their own. Wrap them in the mantle of Your divine mercy. Make them find again in You and in themselves the strength and courage to continue to be brothers and sisters for others, above all for immigrants, giving witness to Your love by their lives.

Touch the hearts of terrorists so that they may recognize the evil of their actions

and may turn to the way of peace and goodness, of respect for the life and for the dignity of every human being, regardless of religion, origin, wealth or poverty.

O God, Eternal Father, in Your mercy hear our prayer which we raise up to You amidst the deafening noise and desperation of the world. We turn to You with great hope, full of trust in your infinite Mercy. Made strong by the examples of the blessed martyrs of Perú, Zbigniew and Michael, who have rendered courageous testimony to the Gospel, to the point of offering their blood, we entrust ourselves to the intercession of Your Most Holy Mother. We ask for the gift of peace and of the elimination from our midst of the sore of terrorism.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

- Pope Francis, **Prayer during visit to Basilica of St. Francis for XXXI World Youth Day.** . . . , Poland, 7/30/16

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## Ministries of Catholic Charities Social Concerns

### What is Social Concerns?

Social Concerns encourages the Community to grow in a deeper understanding of Catholic Social Teaching by providing resources and strategies for effective action in parishes, schools and surrounding communities. Most importantly, it calls us to a deeper understanding in living out the Two Greatest Commandments, which is to Love God and to Love our Neighbors, both locally and globally."

Below are the Ministries that fall under Catholic Charities - Social Concerns.





# Love Your Neighbor



Share the Journey  
#sharejourney



Catholic Charities USA

CRS  
COMMUNITY RELIEF SERVICES

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Catholic Charities - Social Concerns | Theresa Chamblee  
317-236-1404 | fax 317-261-3375 | [Tchamblee@archindy.org](mailto:Tchamblee@archindy.org) [www.Archindy.org/socialconcerns](http://www.Archindy.org/socialconcerns)



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**Catholic Charities**  
*Providing Help. Creating Hope. Serving All.*