

Prepare the way

Second Sunday of Advent



John brings a message of hope and healing to a world that is hurting.

Today's reading from Mark was written when the Jewish people were living under the oppression of the Roman Empire – through heavy taxes, conflict and religious persecution. John brought a message of hope to a world that was hurting. He had good news to share, the Lord was coming! His message was one of hope and healing that the people were longing to hear.

Today, millions of people around the world have had to flee their homes in fear due to conflict and violence. When civil war broke out in Sri Lanka in 1983, many families fled to India in search of safety. The conflict raged on and off for 26 years, before ending in a final brutal series of violent conflicts in 2009. Throughout this time and even still today, Sri Lankan families living in refugee camps in India live in uncertainty but, cling to hope for the future.

After nearly three decades away from their homes, refugee families in India have real concerns about what their future will look like if they do decide to return home, including whether their house is still standing! These barriers often leave refugees completely overwhelmed and returning home can seem impossible.

Janarthan is one refugee who, through your support, has recently made the trip home with his family.

“In the last year your generous support has assisted my family to prepare and return safely to our home in Sri Lanka. When we arrived back in our village, it was an emotional homecoming to see my parents and sisters after so many years apart.”



With your support, Janarthan and his family have recently returned home to Sri Lanka, after living as refugees in India. Today he is rebuilding his home, growing rice and vegetables on his land and working to support his family.

When Janarthan returned home with his family, they were met by a welcome group organised by Act for Peace's partner the Organisation for Eelam Refugee Rehabilitation (OfERR). OfERR helps recently returned refugees solve problems as a community and provides them with the knowledge they need to access essential government services. For many returning Sri Lankans like Janarthan, this interaction provides a sense of belonging, a role in the community and an opportunity to rebuild their nation.

“The support from the Welcome Group and OfERR staff has instilled confidence in me to persevere with resettlement for my family.”

Janarthan is now busy growing rice and vegetables on his family's land and doing day labour to support his family. His two eldest children are enrolled in the nearby school.

By collectively mapping out and overcoming barriers in the way, their journey home was far less daunting. Your support through the Christmas Bowl is bringing hope and good news to refugee families in Sri Lanka and helping to prepare a way home.

Making the return home

After more than 25 years of violence, the civil war in Sri Lanka ended in May 2009. The country now faces huge challenges in resettlement, rehabilitation and reconciliation between ethnic communities. Your support is helping to provide protection to newly returned refugees in Sri Lanka to support them through the difficult reintegration process.



Help returning refugees rebuild their lives

\$1,600

\$1,600 can cover the costs of materials such as tin sheets, cement and bricks to build transitional shelters for refugees as they rebuild their lives in Sri Lanka.