



Christmas Bowl

Second Sunday of Advent

Bringing peace to Sri Lankan refugees returning home

The prophet Isaiah told people who had lost their homeland and who had been through enormous suffering that they could live in peace and harmony again. He was considered radical for speaking of such miracles. But his message resonates this Christmas Bowl, as we support Sri Lankan refugees to return home and build peaceful new lives after years of bloody civil war.

When ethnic violence swept across Sri Lanka, the poorest and most vulnerable families fled to India by boat. Today, there are more than 60,000 Sri Lankan refugees in India. With the war now over, many of them wish to return to their homeland to live in peace and freedom, and help rebuild their nation.

But returning refugees face huge challenges. They arrive home with few belongings, and struggle to find work and housing, psycho-social care, or access health and education.

Vijayakanth and his family know these challenges well. When they returned to Sri Lanka in 2016, it was with three children and few material resources. They had to live in an unsafe area, in a run-down rental home that flooded in the rainy season.

But thanks to your compassion, people like Vijayakanth are supported through their difficulties by Act for Peace's partners, like OfERR (Organisation for Eelam Refugees Rehabilitation). OfERR helped Vijayakanth to learn masonry and painting, and supported his children to start school. OfERR also helped Vijayakanth get the government assistance he needed to build his family a safe, permanent home. Vijayakanth said:

"I am so thankful to OfERR. They have ensured my family's safety and security, particularly my children's. This has paved a new dawn for our children."

Through your kindness, OfERR is helping returnees like Vijayakanth to find new livelihoods and start their lives over in a country that has been shattered by war. You are achieving the miraculous through very practical means by supporting: skills training, financial support and welcome groups that help families to reintegrate.

Florina has been a volunteer with OfERR for 20 years, and has seen the impact of your love for families like Vijayakanth.

"Every person who finds a job when they return to Sri Lanka and every person who is able to breathe easy because they have our support is grateful to you. I want to thank you for your thoughtfulness and love and implore you to keep giving to this noble cause. You are saving one life at a time, and helping people to live again in peace."

