



**Christmas
Bowl**

Third Sunday of Advent
Helping refugees rebuild with joy in Sri Lanka

Joy is that soaring feeling in your soul when Christ's gift first enters your life. But joy is hard to find when civil war forces you from your homeland for decades and then a pandemic threatens your resettlement. This Christmas, please help returned Sri Lankan refugees overcome their challenges and help them build a safe, happy future.

It's been 30 years since Rashan* and his wife Pamodi* fled conflict in Sri Lanka with their eight-year-old daughter. But he'll never forget their terrifying boat journey to India:

"The boat was overloaded with people and so heavy it barely peeped out of water... We made our daughter lie on top of our luggage box. A boat ahead of us was damaged by gunfire. We were scared and doubtful if we would reach our destination."

The family found safety in India, but life was difficult. They spent 27 years in a refugee camp surviving on food rations.

They longed to return home. After peace had settled in Sri Lanka, Rashan and Pamodi travelled back to reclaim her family land. But they were starting all over again – with no jobs, no money and nothing to prove their rights to their land.

People like Rashan and Pamodi were already struggling to rebuild in their homeland after decades of displacement. Now COVID-19 has made that task even harder. Through your gift to the Christmas Bowl, you will bring them the support they urgently need to build new homes, livelihoods and futures.

Your kindness makes it possible for Act for Peace's partner, the Organisation for Eelam Refugees' Rehabilitation (OfERR), to support returned Sri Lankan refugees at this difficult time.

With help from OfERR and caring Christians like you, Rashan and Pamodi were able to take back their land and build a temporary home to live in. OfERR also helped them to install a bore well and water pump, so they could grow and sell food. Today, their thriving farm even provides work to other families.

After decades of fear, hardship and uncertainty, Rashan and Pamodi have finally found joy again. They are reconnecting with long-lost relatives, and hope their daughter and her husband and children will join them soon from India.

Rashan summed up the difference you can this Christmas Bowl:

"If I had stayed back in India, I wouldn't have found this kind of life. There, we had to depend on the government for food. Here we have our land, our farm. The joy we got when we escaped with our lives to get here was unimaginable."

**Names changed to protect identities as returned refugees.*

