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SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

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DICHIARAZIONE DEI VESCOVI DELLA CONFERENZA EPISCOPALE DELLO SRI LANKA

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The full impact of the calamity caused by the Tsunami in the Indian Ocean, has now dawned on us and the Catholic Bishops' Conference expresses our sincere condolences to all those affected by the terrible loss of life and sufferings.

The tragedy of this magnitude has not struck our country since the time of Vihara Maha Devi recorded in the Mahawamsa and it calls for the support and co-operation of every one. We offer our sympathies and prayers to all those bereaved by the loss of loved ones, like parents and children and to those who have suffered from injuries or loss of property.

We are however consoled by the Holy Scriptures (Psalms 145-146) that we are not abandoned to ourselves and that the vicissitudes of our day are not dominated by chaos or fate and so we call on our people to take courage and face the situation bravely. We ask all our people and Catholics in particular to go to the help of those affected irrespective of differences in ethnicity or religion. We are all brothers and sisters and in this tragedy we should display our brotherly love for each other.

We appeal:

- To all the people in the affected areas, to be calm and law-abiding and to those inclined to prey on others, to restrain themselves and not seek to profit from the misfortunes of others.
- Those who were unaffected to provide material or financial help as well as psychological support, to all those who are victims.
- To Catholic organizations, engaged in social services in the various parishes to organize such relief for those affected in whichever part of the country.
- To Catholic associations, to organize prayers to ask the Lord give our people the courage and determination to tide-over this calamity.

We appeal to the International community to come to the aid of the government and the country to relieve the misery of the victims as the magnitude of the calamity is too heavy for our Country to bear alone.

This grave moment calls together to rally round to assist in whatever way we can, those who have been affected by this terrible natural disaster.

Bishop Joseph Vianney Fernando
President Catholic Bishops' Conference in Sri Lanka

Bishop Marius Peiris
Secretary General Catholic Bishops' Conference in Sri Lanka

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