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THE BISHOP OF COVENTRY

The Right Reverend Dr Christopher Cocksworth

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By email only

26th April 2019

His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith
Archbishop's House, Borella,
Colombo 08,
Sri Lanka

Your Eminence,

I bring you greetings in the crucified and risen Christ from the Diocese of Coventry in the Church of England.

My Easter Sunday celebrations began this year as always in the ruins of Coventry Cathedral, destroyed in a terrible act of violence during the dark days of the Second World War. It was there, in a place desecrated by fire, that we gathered around a different sort of fire, the new fire of Easter and we lit the Paschal Candle as catechumens declared their desire to be baptized and confirmed. We then followed the Light of Christ into Coventry's new Cathedral, built as a testimony to the resurrection of Christ and as a sign of hope to the world of God's power to bring peace. We declared the resurrection in the great Easter acclamation, we baptized and confirmed and we celebrated the Eucharist, the feast of our freedom.

When news came through of the most awful atrocities inflicted on our brothers and sisters in Sri Lanka as they gathered for the same celebrations of joy, hope and new life, our hearts were deeply moved and our prayers resounded for you and your people, for other Christians affected by the bombings, for those attacked in their hotels and all those who suffered with them on that most Holy Day.

Please know that our love in Christ continues to go out to you and our prayers reach to the heavens for you. These most awful events will only reinforce our Easter Faith, that Christ died for the sins of the world, which are many, and that God raised Jesus from the dead in an act of divine power that demonstrates that the forces of darkness will never prevail.

We pray for and with you the prayer that Christ taught us, saying, 'Your Kingdom come', and we will work with you to see the will of God done on earth as it is in heaven. May you know, even in your great sufferings, the power of Christ to redeem and make new.

Please also know that Muslim and Hindu leaders in Coventry with whom I work closely and are dear friends, have written to me to express their outrage at the bombings, their concern for Christians in Sri Lanka and the promise of their prayers.

With my deepest sympathy and love in Christ,
Yours sincerely,

+ Christopher Coventry

cc The Right Reverend Dhiloraj Ranjit Canagasabey, the Anglican Bishop of Colombo
His Excellency Manisha Gunasekera, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to the United Kingdom
Cardinal Vincent Nichols, the Archbishop of Westminster