



June 2005  
Volume 1, Issue 2

# REFUGEE VOICE

*Produced by Jesuit Refugee Service Singapore - for private circulation only.*



## **Late Pope John II's call: Bring hope to refugees and migrants**

In his message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2005, the late Pope John Paul II calls Christians to listen to the “cry for help” from all migrants and refugees.

He rallies us to “foster, with active commitment, prospects of hope that will herald the dawn of a more open and supportive society.” Only by bringing hope and support to the millions of refugees and migrants, can they make out God’s presence in their lives, even when “everything seems to be enveloped in darkness.”

His specific message to migrants and their host countries: assimilation of

migrants should not be at the expense of the migrants’ cultural identity. It is rather, taking the necessary steps towards social inclusion, such as learning the national language and complying with the laws and requirements at work.

For genuine integration to take place, a culture of sympathy, not mere tolerance is needed. For this to happen, there must be “dialogue between people of different cultures”, and “an open outlook that refuses to consider solely the differences between migrants and the local people”.

And this principle of respect for cultural differences is founded on universal human rights.

*A summary of the Message of the late Holy Father, John Paul II, for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2005. From the Vatican, 24 November 2004*

### **Individual Highlights:**

Bring Hope to refugees and migrant workers  
Late Pope John II's message 1

World Refugee Day Mass 2005 1

Re-construction in Sri Lanka 2

My Life will go on 3

Aceh in Distress 3

## **WORLD REFUGEE DAY - MASS 2005**

### **“Hope for a Better Tomorrow”**

**Friday, 24th June 2000**  
**Church of St Ignatius**  
**120 King's Road**  
**Mass starts at 7.45 pm.**  
**Please be seated by 7.30pm.**

**Do join us!**

**Highlights: Messages from JRS pastoral workers, updates on refugee situation, sharing by youths and a reception after.**

**Main Celebrant: Archbishop Nicholas Chia. Let's come together as a church to show our spiritual solidarity with the refugees. All are welcome!**



## Re-construction in Sri Lanka

JRS tsunami-related projects have started in Jaffna, Mullaitheevu, Batticaloa and Trincomalee, in north and north-eastern Sri Lanka. Fr. Vinny Joseph, JRS Sri Lanka Country Director, reports on re-construction projects in these areas.

### Shelters for the homeless

JRS has built 61 temporary shelters in Poligandy, Chakottai and 76 in Dutchbar and Kallady, and 150 permanent houses are planned for Panichangkeni.



Internally displaced children

A factory producing the much needed cement building blocks was established by JRS in Batticaloa; in the process giving work to 15 needy families.

Multi-purpose halls in Mullaitheevu have been built for nursery schools, evening study centres, training centres, also two libraries.

### Self-help group receives aid

JRS' self-help group in Trincomalee lost four of its members to the tsunami and the families received financial support from JRS, whilst 126 other members received loans to start income-generating activities.

In Jaffna and Trincomalee, **counselling and psycho-social programmes** are being provided as well as career guidance and leadership training.

### The dignity of working again

Sixty-five young girls are employed sewing school uniforms. Some are victims of the tsunami disaster.

Fishing folk are returning to their fishing activities. JRS has given prawn-fishing nets to 21 families in Chahavaheri, 300 in Mullaitheevu and 54 in Trincomalee.

Fishermen of Duchbar and Vallachanai (Batticaloa) are fishing again after receiving twenty-five 18-foot small boats and nets from JRS.

### Priority for the children



A child learning to write at a JRS tuition centre

Many children orphaned by the tsunami are being cared for in JRS orphanages, and another orphanage is being built in Mullaitheevu for 40 to 50 children. JRS will collaborate with the Sisters of Charity to run this centre.

Temporary school sheds have been erected in various locations, enabling regular school programmes to be conducted.

Pre-school children are given midday meals and the evening study centres in all areas are provided with writing materials.

JRS is also providing some of these children with scholarships.

Source: JRS Sri Lanka, April 2005

**Produced by  
Jesuit Refugee  
Service Singapore.**  
For private circulation only.

PHONE:  
6463 6022

E-MAIL:  
jrs@jesrefsg.org

We're on the Web!

See us at:

[www.veritas.org.sg/jrssg](http://www.veritas.org.sg/jrssg)

[www.jesref.org](http://www.jesref.org)  
(JRS International)

**You can make  
a difference!**

Make cheques  
payable to:  
"Jesuit Refugee  
Service  
Singapore" or  
"SJ Kingsmead  
Hall".

Mail to:  
JRS Singapore  
8 Victoria Park  
Road  
Singapore  
266492

## REFUGEE VOICE

Page 3 of 3

### My Life will go on

We received this moving letter from a Karenni refugee who has lived in a refugee camp for 13 years.

*"I remember spending my childhood life with my family, working together in the farm peacefully and safely in the village, located at the Thai-Myanmar border.*

*My life started to change in 1988 after the people uprising in the whole country.*

*Then, came the serious battles between Myanmar military junta and Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP).*

*People had to abandon their houses and they lost all their belongings. Those who arrived at the refugee camp don't know the meaning of "refugee". "Camp" for them is "a temporary shelter". Life is not like what they think. Their hopes, their dreams can never come true.*

*After a decade had passed, they came to realise the real suffering, pain and hardship of refugees.*

*How can they go home? Have they already lost their nationality? What about the future of their children? The more they think of these questions, the more they are disappointed with their lives.*

*Those who are born and have grown up as refugees felt they are living their lives as animals. With a very narrow life experience and knowledge, there is no vision and mission for their lives, and no guarantee for the future.*

*There is a school for the refugees inside the camp. But the youths can never reach the professional life they aim for.*

*One memorable experience for me was World Refugees Day in 2002. The NGO leaders came and gave encouragement to the refugees. That was the first time I experienced consolation from others.*

*I often ask myself "where is my future?" Still I believe my life will go on. Despite the struggle, I continue to believe that life would become better in the future."*

### Aceh in distress

The 'Dec 26' tsunami took more than 200,000 lives and devastated 12 countries. Up to 5 million people need basic services.

#### Aceh laid waste

Aceh Province, on the northern tip of Sumatra was hardest hit. Villages along the western and northern seashore of Aceh have mostly disappeared.

Almost all of Aceh is now full of displaced people and 450,000 refugees are scattered in make-shift shelters and camps. Many public buildings and local infrastructure were destroyed.

The worst-hit areas are Banda Aceh, Lamno, Calang, Teunom, Meulaboh, Nagan Raya, Pulo Aceh and Lhokseumawe.

#### JRS is present where needed

JRS is working with local NGOs to help the more remote places.

#### How JRS helps

JRS Indonesia assists the survivors in education, empowerment, trauma healing, emergency logistics, health care and humanitarian protection.

With partners, JRS is building houses for the tsunami victims - 500 are planned for Pulo Aceh, 113 in Meulaboh and 100 houses for student occupation in Mamno, Aceh Jaya.

A total of 95 billion rupiah (US\$10 m) is needed for this broad programme. So far, 16.5 billion rupiah (US\$1.8 m) has been raised.

JRS Singapore hopes to support JRS Indonesia by raising funds for the construction of 300 houses. The Singapore Archdiocese Crisis Coordination Team (ACCT) has given S\$270, 000. Shortfall: S\$1.4m

#### About Our Organization...

*JRS is an international Catholic organization with a mission to accompany, serve and plead for the rights of refugees and internally displaced people. JRS was founded by the Jesuits in 1980 and the priority is to be where the need is greatest or where no other organisation is present.*