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## MEDIA RELEASE

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*For immediate release*

### **Catholic Mission called upon to support Sri Lanka through “darkest hours”**

The international Pontifical Mission Societies has called upon its agency in Australia, Catholic Mission, to support recovery efforts in Sri Lanka in the wake of the Easter Sunday terror attacks.

Joining other church agencies in responding to the devastating bombings, which have killed over 250 people, Catholic Mission last week launched an appeal to supporters to help the nation heal.

National Director of Catholic Mission, Father Brian Lucas, said the mission organisation’s focus would be on rebuilding the Sri Lankan Catholic Church infrastructure and parish communities as part of the long recovery process.

‘The Pontifical Mission Societies played a significant role in building the Catholic Church in Sri Lanka in the past,’ he said. ‘Under tragic circumstances we are now called upon to be there to help rebuild once again.’

‘There is a great deal of need in Sri Lanka at this distressing time, but it is encouraging to see so many groups and individuals uniting in their support of those affected by these terrible events.’

‘Catholic Mission’s role is to assist the Catholic community in Sri Lanka to its feet by helping to fully restore their places of worship and other pastoral needs as required.’

Fr Lucas’ counterpart in Sri Lanka, Fr Basil Rohan Fernando, outlined some of those needs in a statement this week. ‘As national director, I am trying to launch programmes to provide immediate relief to children and families affected by the bombing and to provide long-term trauma counselling and spiritual care for victims and their families,’ he said.

‘We appeal to you to come forward and assist us in carrying out these programmes, however you can. We are taking every opportunity to be of help and support to the affected in every way possible.’

‘We kindly look forward to your generous assistance in our darkest hours.’

Supporters can make a contribution to efforts in Sri Lanka through Catholic Mission’s website at [www.catholicmission.org.au/srilanka](http://www.catholicmission.org.au/srilanka). All funds raised will support critical infrastructure repair for churches targeted in the bombings, such as the 175-year-old St Anthony’s Shrine in Colombo and St Sebastian’s in Negombo.

‘We feel an enormous sense of sorrow for those in Sri Lanka who will grieve the loss of their loved ones forever and we ask for your prayerful support,’ said Fr Lucas in a story on Catholic Mission’s website last week.

‘For what is one of the world’s largest networks, the global Catholic community is closely bound by our shared faith. We stand in solidarity beside our brothers and sisters in Sri Lanka—from all backgrounds—as they come to terms with this tragedy and begin what must seem an unthinkable healing process.’

ENDS

*With Missio UK (Catholic Mission in the UK and Wales).*

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