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INDIA Orissa's Catholic Archbishop issues Christmas call to prayer for victims of violence

The Catholic Archbishop of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar in Orissa state is calling on the worldwide church to pray for victims of anti-Christian violence in 2007 and 2008 this Christmas. The text of his prayer is as follows:

"Gracious Father, Lord of all the earth, we praise you for the gift of Jesus Christ, sent into the world to break down the dividing walls of hostility. Have mercy upon those in Orissa who suffer for bearing your name. Give them the peace and the justice that they crave, and cause the walls of bitterness and hatred in Orissa to be torn down. Comfort those who have been bereaved, counsel those who have been traumatised, provide for those who have lost everything. Give them the grace to forgive, and confidence in your gracious favour. Do not let us forget them, our brothers and sisters in Christ, as we celebrate the coming of the Prince of Peace and look forward to his coming again in glory."

CSW's Advocacy Director, Tina Lambert said: "Archbishop Cheenath's prayer reflects the depth of suffering and uncertainty that is prevalent in Orissa's Christian community, two years after the first outbreak of widespread anti-Christian violence. As part of our Inclusive India campaign, we call on Christians throughout the world to heed the Archbishop's call to prayer during Advent and on Christmas Day.

"We also urge a continued international focus on this issue until the perpetrators and inciters of violence are brought to justice and the victims fully compensated".

Notes to Editors:

- Download the full text of the prayer by clicking [here](#). - CSW recently wrote to EU leaders to urge that concern is raised with the government of India about "legitimate fears of impunity on a large scale" (see "India: Orissa acquittals create fears for widespread lack of justice", 4 November). - Please go to CSW's campaign site <http://www.inclusiveindia.org.uk/home.htm> for more information.

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