

My dear brothers and sisters,

Over recent days and weeks we have become aware through news coverage of the tragic situation in Kerala, India due to excessive rain. So many lives have been lost and so many others are under threat through drowning or the spread of disease.

Tens of thousands have had to abandon their homes. The resources of Government and aid agencies are inadequate to meet the needs. And the rain continues to fall.

The Diocese of Lancaster enjoys a close relationship with Mar Joseph Srampickal, and the Syro - Malabar community, based on our service of the Gospel and evidenced in so many examples in our parishes and Diocese. Now I wish to extend to Mar Joseph, his clergy, religious and lay faithful the support of our prayers as they experience a time of great tragedy. We pray for an end to the rains. We pray that the people of Kerala will be given a spirit of fortitude and co-operation as they work to overcome this natural disaster. May the Father who knows our needs better than we know them ourselves, hear our prayers, and answer them as He knows best.

+ Paul

Paul Swarbrick

Bishop of Lancaster