



TSUNAMI APPEAL ONE YEAR ON



On Boxing Day, media all over the world reported about the tsunami that struck the people of Asia, 12 months ago. There were many reports of its effects and the progress being made on re-building people's lives.

Members of the Marist Family have proven their solidarity, so it is appropriate to communicate to you, about our Marist efforts to assist people whose lives were so tragically affected a year ago. This account is an edited version of the report from the www.champagnat.org website.

In response to the appeal from Br. Seán, the Superior General, Marists around the world have contributed very generously to the Institute's Tsunami Appeal. Over \$US1 million has been received, AUD\$150,000 was sent from Australia. It is a considerable amount. It comes from many diverse sources: Marist schools and ministries, communities, international donor agencies, and friends. We know that money has been given by people who themselves are poor. What they might lack in financial resources, they more than balance with open-hearted compassion.

Because of your contributions we have been able to respond to situations of need, known to us. Marists in the affected areas were able to provide people with immediate assistance, as soon as the water receded. The necessities of daily life were provided.

Once short-term needs were seen to, there was space to step back and study longer-term needs. Assistance was provided to a Congregation of Sisters, known to the Brothers in Sri Lanka, towards rebuilding their school. We were able to assist individual families re-establish their livelihood.

We have been able to offer hope to families in Kalutara in Sri Lanka, by rebuilding their school that was destroyed. A safer area of land had to be found, then construction commenced. When the new school year commences in 2006 five new classrooms will be ready to welcome the students to their new school. Once classes are under way, construction will continue, so that the extra classrooms needed for the following year can be prepared. Gradually, a school, of a size needed by the locality, with all the facilities that a school must provide, will be constructed.

Across the water in Tamil Nadu in India, the Brothers have been assisting the village of Vizhunda Mavadi to return to normal. Their need is not so much in buildings, but in more intangible, but essential things: stability, routine, security, encouragement, encouragement of education, counselling and hope. The project established to deal with the human effects of trauma is well underway. The projects, directed mainly at children, include counselling by professionals, and educational and recreational opportunities. While progress might not be as visible as a school being re-built, it is real and substantial nonetheless. That people, especially children, are able to play in the same sea that destroyed so much 12 months ago, says everything.

The Superior General's Appeal funds are managed by the
Marist Brothers Bureau of International Solidarity.

