

In Sri Lanka, a Divine Mercy Sunday message of love amid death

A week after suicide bombers killed more than 250 people in Sri Lanka, many who were attending Easter Sunday Mass at Catholic churches, Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith of Colombo celebrated Mass in a small chapel in the capital.

Though only a small group of Church and country leaders were physically in attendance, thousands more Catholics watched and attended the liturgy via television. Fearing additional attacks, Cardinal Ranjith has canceled Masses across the country indefinitely. But his homily message was not one of fear or of warning or of condemnation. It was, purely and simply, of love. And it was powerful. For this reason, I am turning much of this column over to him.

“There is nothing as precious and important as human life,” the cardinal said. “Therefore human life is the most beautiful expression of God’s love for humanity. Every single child that is born to us is a precious gift that is given to us.”

He continued: “It is as if God says, ‘I love you,’ each time that child makes that first shout from the womb of the mother,” he said. “Therefore we must love and respect each other. Every single person is a million possibilities for every one of us.”

“Every single person whom God has given to us is a reflection of his love and his mercy because this person whom we meet or we do not yet know ... is a person who can carry a million blessings to us,” he said.

“We need others,” Cardinal Ranjith continued. “God said we need the others. It is not good for man to be alone. We cannot

live our life alone. It's a blessing to see so many people of so many colors and so many hues. Each one is a blessing of God to us. That is why we cannot, in the name of God, we cannot destroy another person. It's a contradiction to kill someone in the name of God, God who is the all merciful, God who is the all love, God who has created my brother and my sister."

Speaking directly to the Easter attacks, he said: "It is a great tragedy that happened. It's an insult to humanity, that human beings, and above all, in the name of God, God who is love, mercy. ...

So how can we kill someone?" he said. "How can we be so indifferent to others? This is the beauty of our life. God has given us all our brothers and sisters as beautiful expressions of his mercy. Let us, therefore, in the name of God, in the name of all that is human, all that is noble, extend our hands of friendship and fraternity to all our brothers and sisters of whatever class, society or religion or anything that differentiates us. Differences are good, differences are beautiful. ... That's what makes human life such a beautiful experience."

The cardinal was right to deliver a message of such love, but it does not mean, after a week of burials and mourning, that it was easy. May God bless this great man of faith.

Gretchen R. Crowe is editorial director for periodicals at Our Sunday Visitor. Follow her on Twitter [@GretchenOSV](#).