



## *Committee on International Justice and Peace*

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September 19, 2008

His Eminence Cardinal Varkey Vithayathil, C.S.S.R.  
Major Archbishop of Ernakulam-Angamaly  
President, Catholic Bishops' Conference of India  
Archdiocesan Curia  
Mount St. Thomas  
P.O. Box 2580, P.O. Kakkanad  
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Your Eminence:

It is with great sorrow and shock that our Conference of Bishops has followed the attacks on Christians and Christian institutions of the past few weeks in India. The brutal murder of a priest in Andhra Pradesh on August 16 was followed a week later by attacks against Christians in Orissa in misplaced retaliation for the killing of Hindu leader, Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati, despite the Maoists allegedly having claimed responsibility. I understand that killings, destruction of Christian communities, churches and institutions in Orissa continue and that violence has spread to Kerala and is beginning in Karnataka.

As Chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I want to express our solidarity with the Church in India in this time of trouble and enormous suffering. I understand that Catholic Relief Service is working discreetly, at the request of local government and with local partners, to provide emergency medical care to those who fled their homes and are now in camps in Orissa.

You, your fellow bishops and all the Church are in our thoughts in this time of need. Praying that the Lord will continue to give you and the Church in India strength and grace in these trying times, I remain

Fraternally yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Thomas G. Wenski  
Bishop of Orlando  
Chairman, Committee on International Justice  
and Peace