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INDIA “Being Untouchable” photography exhibition on Dalits to open at St. Paul’s Cathedral

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) is pleased to announce that *Being Untouchable*, the groundbreaking photography exhibition by Marcus Perkins for CSW on India’s Dalits, will be displayed by St Paul’s Cathedral from June 14 to July 6. There will be a private view on June 14 from 6-7:30pm.

Being Untouchable is a rare and intimate series of portraits of the lives of Indian Dalits (previously known as “untouchables”), that exposes the present-day impact of these centuries of oppression, and explores how although “untouchability” was abolished by India’s Constitution, it continues to be practiced today.

St Paul’s Cathedral will hold three Meditative Eucharists on Sundays during the exhibition. These will explore the theme of untouchability and focus on the Dalits of India, the untouchable within our own society, and ultimately the untouchable within ourselves.

The Reverend Canon Mark Oakley, Treasurer of St Paul’s Cathedral, said, “Marcus Perkins’ photographs are haunted by the beauty and pain of what is being observed. The color of India – those wonderful fabrics, textures and smells – is skillfully captured but is shadowed by the darkness of reality for these men, women and children deemed to be unworthy of human touch. We are thrown back on ourselves as we look. What can we do? What happened to these people? What do we consider untouchable in our own culture and day? It is only right that such vital questions are explored in reflective acts of worship in the cathedral making this more than an exhibition. It is an invitation to see life through a different lens.”

Photographer Marcus Perkins said, “Although almost every aspect of life in India has been covered by photography exhibitions, very few have paid systematic attention to casteism. Many outside India either don’t know about caste, or assume it is dying out as a result of India’s economic boom. That is not the case, and we have sought here to illustrate the lives of a few, who typify both the extreme and the everyday suffering that millions of Dalits face. This exhibition is a tribute to them.”

David Griffiths, South Asia Team Leader at CSW, said, “*Being Untouchable* is both a hand of warm friendship to Dalits, and a cry of protest about their suffering. Developed in partnership with Dalit community leaders, who allowed us to share in the privilege of solidarity with their people, it is a plea to let Dalits tell their own story, express their own aspirations and forge their own future. St Paul’s Cathedral is one of London’s most iconic institutions, and by highlighting the lives of a people once called ‘untouchable’ and often treated little differently today, it is amplifying the key message that being untouchable has no place in our world.”