

"We want to respond to the pandemic of the virus with the universality of prayer, compassion, tenderness. Let us stay united." - Pope Francis

27 March, 2020

JOIN CARITAS TO HELP PROTECT THE WORLD'S MOST VULNERABLE PEOPLE FROM CORONAVIRUS

As Australia intensifies its response to meet the unprecedented challenges of COVID-19, Caritas Australia is urging thousands of school children, teachers, churches and community leaders across Australia to get involved in Project Compassion and act in solidarity with those most marginalised globally.

Caritas Australia is the Catholic church's international aid and development agency and part of one of the largest humanitarian networks in the world. Caritas Australia's CEO, Kirsty Robertson says for the communities which we serve through your support across 23 countries globally, the spread of the Coronavirus represents a growing risk.

This is particularly so due to growing water and sanitation challenges, as well as during food distributions and in the delivery of medical and emergency supplies.

"We understand that the challenge and impacts of COVID-19 in Australia are great, and we urge everyone to do whatever we can to look after each other and stay strong," said Ms Robertson. "But we also know that Australians are willing during such crises, to act in solidarity and compassion with those who are even more vulnerable."

"Imagine facing all of this in a country or marginalised community that is already experiencing poverty, with an insecure food supply, no fresh drinking water, and fewer hospital beds? Now more than ever we must act in solidarity with the world's poorest and most marginalised communities."

Caritas Australia through our international network has already been supporting marginalised communities through its existing humanitarian and long-term development programs, in disaster preparedness and promoting awareness of health and sanitation in this crisis.

Ms Robertson warns that if the virus hits places like the Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh, or conflict-torn communities in the Middle East, the impact will be catastrophic.

"Communities like these have lacked sufficient access to proper sanitary living conditions and medical support, even before the spread of COVID-19," Ms Robertson said. "The situation for people in these communities is already highly precarious."

"The need for support and donations during Caritas Australia's Project Compassion which takes place over Lent is more urgent than ever. If you are in a position to donate to Caritas Australia, your donation will truly save lives."

There are also some great ways to fundraise online for families, schools and communities while at home. Go to lent.caritas.org.au or call 1800 024 413.

Ms Robertson has made a special video for supporters, discussing how Caritas Australia is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, and why we need your help today. Watch the video at <https://bit.ly/Kirsty-Robertson>

To donate to Project Compassion visit Caritas Australia's website, lent.caritas.org.au or call 1800 024 413.

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