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A local message with a global impact

Just four simple words are comforting the lives of some of the world's most vulnerable communities, as they face the devastating impacts of the global COVID-19 crisis.

#WeAreStillHere is the message of an awareness and fundraising campaign launched last week across social media by Catholic Mission, quickly becoming an international rallying cry for Catholic missionaries around the world.

"In times of hardship, it's important that we stick together," says Catholic Mission National Director Fr Brian Lucas.

"COVID-19 is having a significant impact on our mission partners and the Church, and it's vital that we help support the work of mission to the most vulnerable in this time.

"Just four words—we are still here—constitute a simple message with great impact. It's saying that those most in need are still being given the best practical and pastoral support during the current global emergency."

The organisation is also running an appeal for funds to ensure the critical work for children, communities and future church leaders can continue.

At the Eden Gardens Children's Home in Nagaland, India, eight-year-old Nathaniel and sixteen other vulnerable children have no family or safe place to return to during the crisis. Meanwhile, their friends have returned home.

"For those children who have nowhere to go, Eden Gardens remains open all day, every day. Our mission is to help the kids, whoever is here, under any circumstances," reported Fr Rajesh Lobo, director of the home.

Fr Lucas says missionaries around the world, like Fr Rajesh, remain dedicated to serving their communities despite the COVID-19 impact.

"They are there, supporting with solidarity and compassion, saying we are still here, doing our best to keep vital, life-changing projects running despite COVID-19 restrictions."

Fr Lucas says Catholic Mission will remain in service to those in need around the world. "We are still here for our project partners in the same way that they are there for the children, communities and church leaders that they serve."

For more information and to support the appeal, visit catholicmission.org.au/Nathaniel.

About Catholic Mission

Catholic Mission is the Australian agency of the Pontifical Mission Societies – the Catholic Church's global organisation dedicated to continuing Jesus Christ's mission in the world: that all may have life to the full. Founded in Sydney in 1847, Catholic Mission contributes funding and project support to critical church-run initiatives in Africa, Asia, Oceania, and South America. These include spiritual formation, pastoral care, education, health, sanitation and agricultural programs. Here in Australia, we form people to go out and be missionary in their professional and personal lives; to pray, advocate and take action for those on the margins.