

May 17, 2017

AUSTRALIA'S CATHOLIC WOMEN UNITE FOR THE WORLD'S MOST MARGINALISED

In the month in which Australia celebrates its mothers, over 500 women will come together to stand in solidarity with the world's poor by attending "Women for the World" events. The fundraisers organised by Caritas Australia, the Catholic Church's international aid and development agency, this year will be held in Canberra, Melbourne and Sydney.

Michelle Fernon, a long-time supporter of Caritas Australia, is one of the driving forces behind the Women for the World event.

"Women make up more than half of the world's poor. Many face systemic discrimination that prevents them from gaining an education, accessing healthcare and securing employment. Yet we know that when we help a woman, her family and her community also climb out of poverty," Ms Fernon said.

Sr. Leonor Montiel, also known as Sr. Len, is the Director of the Maryknoll Seedling of Hope program. She will share the inspirational story of the Caritas-supported program at the Sydney event.

Sister Len works daily to return hope to those affected by HIV and AIDS through the delivery of psycho-social support, healthcare, education and vocational training. Born in the Philippines, for almost two decades she has worked as a social and community development worker in Cambodia.

"Through Seedling of Hope people living with HIV and AIDS have a chance to live a new life with dignity, to improve their economic wellbeing and become independent, and transform their own lives," Sr. Len said.

"The aim is to make a real difference in the lives of youth and families for whom the effects of HIV and AIDS have been compounded by the impacts of living with poverty and disadvantage. By focusing on their psychological health as much as their physical health, we're able to ensure that they have everything they need to meet their daily needs, including support for their livelihoods."

To learn more about Women for World Sydney or to donate to the Caritas-supported Maryknoll Seedling of Hope program go to <https://womenfortheworld.gofundraise.com.au/cms/home>

Watch a film highlighting the Maryknoll Seedling of Hope program in Cambodia –

<https://vimeo.com/216113034>

Caritas, the Catholic agency for international aid and development, is part of Caritas Internationalis, the second largest humanitarian network in the world.

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