

March 18, 2020

IMAGINE A WORLD WITHOUT ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER

According to the United Nations, 785 million people globally do not have access to clean water, and by 2030, 700 million may be displaced by water scarcity.¹ In Africa alone, the average woman walks six kilometres to haul 18 kilograms of water each day.

In the lead up to World Water Day on March 22, Caritas's Head of International Programs, Caroline Preston has called on thousands of school children, teachers, churches and community leaders across Australia to act in solidarity with those most marginalised globally.

"We know that good handwashing is key to help prevent the spread of diseases and having access to clean water is the most important first step," Ms Preston said.

For the communities which Caritas Australia serves through your support across 23 countries in Asia, the Pacific, Africa, the Middle East and within First Australian communities, the spread of COVID-19 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.

"Sadly, as the Coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to spread in an unpredictable manner, it represents a growing risk to vulnerable communities globally," Ms Preston said.

"We are all part of one human family and Project Compassion is Caritas Australia's leading campaign empowering people and communities to eradicate poverty in all its forms. When we stand in solidarity we 'Go Further, Together' to support others to live a life of dignity and hope."

Ms Preston said during this year's Project Compassion campaign, Caritas Australia's annual Lenten fundraiser, and during these times of global change, your support is more important than ever.

"Many of those most marginalised will certainly be impacted by these enormous challenges. So, if we feel a bit at a loss as what to do, I'd encourage you to give despite these challenging times and take up the water challenge."

During this year's Project Compassion, which has as its' theme *Global Community – Go Further Together*, Caritas Australia is sharing six stories of its' work in global communities. The stories highlight the journey of going further together in the lives of people of all ages. The stories will come from a range of countries including the Philippines, Cambodia, Malawi, India, Papua New Guinea and Australia.

To donate to Project Compassion or learn more about the Water Challenge visit Caritas Australia's website, lent.caritas.org.au or call 1800 024 413.

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¹ The United Nations.