



For immediate release
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MEDIA RELEASE: Catholic Mission appeal puts its faith in war-torn regions supporting future priests fulfil their vocation.

Catholic Mission has launched its first appeal for 2021, focusing on the formation and education of seminarians in north-western Cameroon where young men are still following their call to the priesthood, despite the backdrop of an ongoing civil war.

“These young men, studying at St Thomas Aquinas Major Seminary in Bambui, will not only support those in their faith communities but will be advocates for change and carers for all in need”, says Catholic Mission National Director, Fr Brian Lucas.

“In many countries around the world priests often fulfil not only a leadership role for their local parish, but for the wider community,” he says.

St Thomas Aquinas Major Seminary has seen a rise in the number of men following their vocation, despite ongoing conflict in north-western Cameroon. However, with a rising cost of living, many seminarians like Benjamin cannot afford to continue their studies without help.

“I know I have something to contribute. I just want to do something simple, to be of service,” says Benjamin.

Since 2016, communities like Benjamin’s in the north-west of the country have faced ongoing conflict due to government oppression and separatist attacks between the French and English-speaking states of Cameroon. Over half a million people from rural communities have become internally displaced, with many fleeing to larger cities to escape the violence.

“We hear [gun] shots every day – it is very troubling, traumatic actually. We have to transform this situation and give witness to justice and peace” says Benjamin.

Witnessing first-hand the devastation these conflicts have on the people of Cameroon, suffering needlessly due to this violence, Benjamin is desperate to help in some way, and is confident he can become an effective Church leader for his community and provide support during these challenging times. But Benjamin needs help to continue his seminary formation to complete his spiritual and practical studies.

“The training of priests in the mission territories, especially in places of conflict is an ongoing challenge”, Fr Brian says.

“Often local communities do not have the means to ensure their priests are well trained and Catholic Mission through the Society of Saint Peter Apostle provides the opportunity for future priests to fulfil their vocation.”

A gift to Catholic Mission will also help many other mission programs supporting the education and formation of Church leaders, as well as Church-run programs for children and communities in need in Cameroon and around the world.

To learn more head to catholicmission.org.au/Cameroon

CAPTION: A gift to Catholic Mission will help support the education and formation of Church leaders in Cameroon and around the world.

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For further information:

John Hyde
Senior Communications Officer

Tel: 0419 997 857

Email:
media@catholicmission.org.au

Website:
catholicmission.org.au

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. Catholic Mission has offices in 27 Australian dioceses.