

For immediate release

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Project Compassion calls on Australians to 'Be More'

Ash Wednesday on February 17 marks the official launch of Project Compassion 2021, Caritas Australia's annual Lenten appeal, which runs for the six weeks of Lent.

In its 56th year, Project Compassion is one of Australia's longest running appeals, and has been a long-standing Lenten fixture in parishes across Australia with its iconic donation boxes. In this time, Australians have raised millions of dollars for marginalized communities worldwide.

Technology has opened up a world of possibilities for parishes to connect with the development programs that Project Compassion makes possible. This year, for the first time, parishioners are able to connect directly with Caritas Australia's overseas Program staff via 'Virtual Immersions'.

The 75 minute 'Virtual Immersions' connect Australian parishes to international programs through prayer, reflection and dialogue.

At a time of such upheaval and challenge across the globe, possibly the greatest worldwide challenges since the inception of Project Compassion, Caritas Australia encourages all Australians to 'Be More' this year to help vulnerable communities.

"Project Compassion gives us the opportunity to show compassion for the poor in a special way, not just through material giving, but through spiritual giving," said Bishop Terry Brady, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Sydney.

"We encourage all Australians to support their sisters and brothers across the world this Project Compassion, so that we can continue to work with communities during these challenging times to strengthen resilience and build a stronger, more equal future for all," said Kirsty Robertson, CEO of Caritas Australia.

"The theme 'Be More' is inspired by the words of St Oscar Romero, to 'aspire not to have more, but to be more', and challenges us to stand in solidarity with people around the world who continue to face the injustice of poverty."

"We invite all who hold the Lenten season dear to their hearts to join us in our journey of hope, love and of course, compassion. Our journey towards a better, more just world where all may thrive," said Ms Robertson.

For each of the six weeks, Australians can learn more about the theme through the eyes of a community leader facing incredible challenges, with stories from Bangladesh, Solomon Islands, Tanzania and Indonesia, available online at lent.caritas.org.au.

In 2020, nearly 900 parishes and over 1000 schools helped to raise \$7.91 million through Project Compassion.

To donate to Project Compassion, organize your own fundraiser or get more information visit lent.caritas.org.au or call 1800 024 413. Your gift will help uplift the most marginalised and vulnerable members of society. A brighter and more just future for all can start today.

The Catholic agency for international aid and development

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MEMBER

Parishioners can register for a 75 minute evening session at
lent.caritas.org.au/virtualimmersions

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Caritas Australia is a member of Caritas Internationalis, one of the world's largest humanitarian networks in the world with 162 agencies operating in 200 countries and territories.