

MEDIA RELEASE: Catholic charities supply home-care medical kits to help fight Covid-19 in India

As parts of Australia face a worrying surge in coronavirus activity, Catholic Mission Australia has worked in collaboration with Syro-Malabar Eparchy of Melbourne, to ensure urgent medical information and support is available in parts of the world stricken with fear and uncertainty by the global pandemic.

In the south west of India, in the region of Kerala, the country's highest number of positive infections has been reported, in both rural and urban areas. The mortality rates are also rising.

Misleading information about the virus and vaccines, has circulated in the region, prompting local Catholic charities to take immediate action.

"It was found that in many cases, death could have been avoided if people had right and authentic information with them," says Catholic Mission National Director, Fr Brian Lucas.

Catholic Mission Australia and Eparchy of St Thomas Apostle of Melbourne of the Syro-Malabars, Australia, have partnered with Caritas India to produce home-based care Covid medial information kits, in a project called *Reach out. Give life*.

Thousands of the kits will be given families in the Kerala region. Local Catholic charities are working with the Kerala Catholic Bishops Council (KCBC) and the Kerala Social Service Forum (KSSF) to reach out to 32 Diocesan partners.

"These kits will be distributed among the families having members with Covid symptoms, and this will be console for those families," says KCBC Deputy Secretary General Fr. Jacob G. Palackapally.

"The special intervention of Caritas India, in collaboration with Catholic Mission and Syro-Malabar Diocese of Melbourne is ineffable in this crucial time"

The home-based care kits include a pulse oximeter and digital thermometer, with guidelines for use, as well as personal protective equipment (PPE) and other vital materials, such as face masks, hand sanitiser, inhalers

The *Reach out, Give life* program was inaugurated by Cardinal George Alencherry, Major Archbishop, Syro-Malabar Church. He thanked the Syro-Malabar Eparchy of Melbourne and Catholic Mission Australia for their support.

"*Reach out. Give life*, is really wonderful as a caption, and also an action, for Kerala., " he says

"These are gifts and a great commitment by Caritas India to the society especially poor people who are stricken by this pandemic covid-19".

Catholic Mission and the Eparchy of St Thomas Apostle of Melbourne of the Syro-Malabars, Australia have made a financial contribution to the project.

“Our experience in Australia in connection with the coronavirus pandemic has been different to other countries but has affected every one of us one way or another, some more than others, says Catholic Mission National Director Fr Brian Lucas.

“Perhaps, as we give thanks for that, in a local context, we might find the motivation to take more notice of the needs of those not so fortunate”

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Caption 1: Thousands of “*Reach out. Give life.*” coronavirus information kits will be given to families in the Kerala region, in south west India, ensuring urgent medical information and support is available to those most in need.

Caption 2: From left - Bishop Joseph Kariyil (Bishop of Cochin), Bishop Joshua Mar. Ignatius (Bishop of Mavelikkara, CBCI Vice President) and Cardinal Mar. George Alencherry (Major Archbishop, Syro-Malabar Church, President, KCBC) at the inauguration and handover of the *Reach out. Give life* homebased-care kits

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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.