



Modern Slavery Featured in Perth Christmas Concert - 10 December 2022

Last Saturday the Perth Catholic community came together at the Chapel of St Thomas Aquinas, Aquinas College for an evening of beautiful music and to reflect on the issue of modern slavery in Australia and our world today. The event, *“Leaning Towards the Light”* was organized by Catholic Mission Western Australia to raise funds for their projects that prevent human trafficking in Ethiopia and Thailand. It was held in the presence of the Most Rev Timothy Costelloe, Archbishop of Perth who delivered the final Blessing.

A panel of experts participated in a pre-concert symposium to help attendees gain an understanding of how modern slavery impacts individuals, communities and society. This included discussion of how businesses and Catholic organisations must assess and address the risks of modern slavery in their supply chains and operations to comply with the Modern Slavery Act 2018. The symposium was moderated by Dr Fiona McGaughey from the University of Western Australia who also gave a compelling keynote reflection as part of the concert program. Other panellists included Jenny Stanger representing the Australian Catholic Anti-slavery Network (ACAN), Dr Martijn Boersma, Associate Professor of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking at the University of Notre Dame Australia and Shaeron Yapp, Principal Adviser for Human Rights at Rio Tinto.

The event coincided with United Nations International Human Rights Day which falls on 10 December every year. Attendees were treated to a professional musical program featuring international star tenor Paul O’Neill, organist Alessandro Pittorino and the Aquinas College Schola Cantorum choir conducted by Hugh Lydon. A live stream of the program was beamed

across the world to a global audience. The event was made possible by the following major sponsors: Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand, West Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office (WACMRO), Crimestoppers WA and the University of Notre Dame Australia.



“It was privilege to represent ACAN at this event which uniquely combined music and words to create awareness about modern slavery and also action to support prevention programs on the ground,” said Jenny Stanger. “I commend the organisers for making a multi-year commitment to these projects.”

Donations can still be made from anywhere across Australia by visiting the Catholic Mission website.

Dr Fiona McGaughey’s Christmas Reflection can also be viewed here:

<https://www.acan.org.au/acan-blog/christmas-keynote-reflection-10-december-2022-aquinas-college-perth>

The event will take place again in 2023 as part of a five-year fundraising commitment to the projects overseas. To get involved with this event in 2023 as a sponsor or volunteer please contact Francis Leong at director.cm@perthcatholic.org.au