

**\*\*\*MEDIA RELEASE\*\*\***

**Project Compassion – Week Two**

When Thu was only 12 years old, he lost his leg after accidentally stepping on an unexploded land mine from the Vietnam War. Living with a disability in rural Vietnam presented many challenges for Thu, who worked mainly as a rice farmer. After his wife, Linh, suffered a stroke, he had to take on the additional role of her carer.

Thu joined the Empowerment of People with Disabilities program, supported by Caritas Australia through our local partners, the Centre for Sustainable Rural Development (SRD).

Through the program, Thu learnt livelihood, financial and independent living skills. He also joined a Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) where he could interact with other people with disabilities and earn income by making incense sticks.

The VSLA helped Thu to obtain a loan so that he could set up a barber shop and earn extra income to support his family. The program also helped Thu to build an accessible toilet for Linh, who has become more independent thanks to the support of a physiotherapist.

During Lent, we are invited to take up the call to fast, pray and give alms. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the many crises that have struck the world over the past 12 months mean that many communities are in great need of your support.

Supporting Project Compassion is a way for us to proclaim the faith that is in our hearts and help our sisters and brothers in need. Your gift will help uplift the most marginalised and vulnerable members of society.

Schools and parishes can join Caritas Q&As to interact online with our staff, partners and program participants, or download resources to learn about Caritas Australia's work and Mission. There are also resources for how to set up a local fundraiser for Project Compassion. This year, there are accessible audio-narrated and audio-described videos for schools for each of the stories, as well as a wealth of other resources for the classroom and parish communities.

To learn more or donate to Project Compassion, visit Caritas Australia's website: [www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion/](http://www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion/) or call 1800 024 413.

**CONTACT:** Jessica Stone on 0490 684 867 / [jessica.stone@caritas.org.au](mailto:jessica.stone@caritas.org.au)