

For immediate release

Monday 19 October 2026

100 pilgrims walk the 16km Kirup Camino to celebrate 100 Years of World Mission Sunday

As the Church marked 100 years of World Mission Sunday last Sunday, communities across Australia celebrated a shared commitment to mission. Throughout October, Masses, prayer gatherings and local initiatives have brought people together in faith and solidarity. In the Diocese of Bunbury, Western Australia, the celebrations also took to the trails, with 100 pilgrims walking the annual 16km Kirup Camino.

On the Feast Day of St Therese of Lisieux, patron saint for Mission, 100 pilgrims walked the annual 16km Kirup Camino, to celebrate 100 years of World Mission Sunday, in addition to launching World Mission Month in Western Australia on Thursday, 1 October 2026.

Now in its third year, the event is held in the [Catholic Diocese of Bunbury](#) on the first day of October for the start of World Mission Month each year.

This year's pilgrimage began at the Church of St Therese, in Balingup, with two pilgrims' blessings at 8.30am and 9am, to allow for a staggered start with only 50 pilgrims able to fit at one time in the small village church.

To conclude the Kirup Camino, a pilgrims' mass was held at 3pm at the Holy Family Church, in Kirup, presided by the Bishop of Bunbury, the Most Reverend George Kolodziej SDS.

The Kirup Camino follows a picturesque walk trail along the rail reserve between the small South West towns of Balingup and Kirup, passing rolling, lush green paddocks and beside jarrah and marri forest, where Spring wildflowers are found by the observant.

As the Church celebrates 100 years of World Mission Sunday this year on 18 October, it was fitting that 100 pilgrims joined the 2026 Kirup Camino which sold out in early September.

World Mission Sunday was established by Pope Pius XI in 1926 to foster a universal missionary spirit, to encourage vocations, and to support the growing needs of those involved in building up the church's activity, particularly in developing areas.

For a century now, World Mission Sunday has made, and continues to make, a real difference in the lives of people around the world through shared prayer and generosity.

Pope Leo's World Mission Sunday message for 2026, centred on the theme "One in Christ, united in mission", prompts reflection on the work of missionaries around the world and highlights the Universal Church's enduring commitment to support the life-giving work of mission.

Pope Leo encourages the whole Church to continue its missionary journey with joy and zeal in the Holy Spirit, saying "the more united we are in Christ, the better able we will be to carry out together the mission that he entrusts to us."

Catholic Mission's focus for World Mission Month this year is building a new primary school closer to where displaced families now live in rural Malawi.

In recent years, the people of Malawi have faced severe hardship due to devastating floods which destroyed homes, farmland, and entire communities, and for many families, daily life has become a constant struggle for survival.

The 100 pilgrims participating in this year's Kirup Camino raised over \$4000 to help build classrooms, provide nutritious meals, and ensure children have the books and supplies they need to learn in rural Malawi.

The Kirup Camino was first held on 1 October 2024 with 25 pilgrims participating, while the 2025 Kirup Camino attracted over 60 pilgrims and raised over \$1000 for struggling communities in Zambia.

The annual pilgrimage is organised by Catholic Mission's Province Director for WA and Diocesan Director for Bunbury, Shendelle Mullane, in conjunction with the Spirituality Hub at the Church of the Holy Family, Kirup.

ENDS

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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. 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 act for those on the margins. Catholic Mission has offices in 27 Australian dioceses.