AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

BISHOPS COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE, MISSION AND SERVICE

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Prison Sunday 2026

Catholics across Australia are being encouraged to mark Prison Sunday on November 8 by directing their thoughts and prayers to prisoners, their families and those who care for them including chaplains.

Visiting a prison in Equatorial Guinea in April, Pope Leo XIV said: “No one is excluded from God’s love.”

“True justice seeks not so much to punish as to help rebuild the lives of victims, offenders and communities wounded by evil,” he said.

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference delegate for prisons, Bishop Tim Norton SVD, said prisoners, their families and those released from custody often found themselves on the margins of society due to social stigma.

“But all people are deserving of dignity and respect which can be shown through personal connection,” he said.

“Despite the challenges they face in ministering to people who have often led troubled lives, prison chaplains and others working in post-release programs enable the light of the Gospel to shine into the darkness of the prison experience.

“Whatever offence they have committed and whatever the harm it has caused, prisoners are offered love, compassion and respect by our chaplains who offer a listening ear, spiritual care and a reminder that no person is beyond God’s love.”

Bishop Norton said visiting was often a lifeline for people in prison.

“It’s an opportunity to provide practical and emotional support,” he said.

“It can also serve as a reminder that the Church stands by the side of prisoners and God does not abandon anyone.”

Bishop Norton expressed thanks for the many chaplains working in correctional facilities across Australia.

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