

# PARISH BOOKLET 2023



## INSIDE:

- STORIES
- REFLECTIONS AND PRAYERS
- FUNDRAISING GUIDELINES



## BOOK YOUR LIVE ENGAGEMENT



**“LET US PRAY  
FOR PEACE: PEACE  
IN THE WORLD  
AND IN EACH OF  
OUR HEARTS.”**

**POPE FRANCIS**

 [www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion](http://www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion)

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 **Caritas**  
AUSTRALIA

End poverty  
Promote justice  
Uphold dignity

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## FIND US ONLINE

Visit the Caritas Australia website for more information about Project Compassion 2023, including useful resources.

**CARITAS.ORG.AU/  
PROJECT-COMPASSION**



## CREATE YOUR PARISH FUNDRAISING PAGE!

Have a Project Compassion event planned? Want to have some fun and share the news? Set up your parish fundraising page today at:

**CARITAS.ORG.AU/  
PROJECT-COMPASSION**

## GOVERNMENT NOTICE

All fundraisers, participants and volunteers agree to abide by and comply with all relevant legislation, regulations and best practice guidelines (as appropriate) in each State and/or Territory of Australia.

Individuals and other legal entities who fundraise for Caritas Australia (Fundraisers) are responsible for (but not limited to):

- Complying with relevant fundraising laws and regulations in each jurisdiction where they fundraise (and complying with the fundraising laws in every Australian State and Territory if donations are accepted on the internet).

- Ensuring that all monies raised via fundraising activities will be donated to the stated purpose of the appeal.

- Ensuring that all donations are forwarded to Caritas Australia by **31 May 2023**.

For full fundraising responsibilities, please refer to our website: [www.caritas.org.au](http://www.caritas.org.au).



**Australian Government**

Cover photo: Laxmi and her mother, Mankala live in the Jajarkot district in western Nepal. Jajarkot is one of the least developed districts in the region with almost half of the population living below the poverty line. Their main source of income is from growing produce in nearby fields.

All photos by: Richard Wainwright for Nepal, Australia, and Zimbabwe. Phan Tan Lam for Vietnam.

# WELCOME

## KIRSTY ROBERTSON CARITAS AUSTRALIA CEO



Last year was filled with emergencies and crises that many of us could have never imagined happening in our lifetime. For many vulnerable communities across the world, 2022 proved to be even more challenging and devastating than 2020 and 2021. Yet, despite everything we have endured in recent times, I have faith that together, as one human family, we can continue to work to make the world a more just and better place for all.

Each year, Project Compassion comes as a timely reminder of the importance of solidarity and how a single act of kindness – whether big or small, can make a life-changing impact in the lives of those who need it most.

I too discovered the impact that my donation could have when I was very young and first came across the Project Compassion box. I knew then that, through the power of kindness and generosity, I could have a long-lasting difference in the lives of future generations.

The theme of Project Compassion is *'For All Future Generations'*. This phrase is a powerful affirmation that the good that we do today will extend and impact the lives of generations to come. It is also a call for all of us to play our part in making the world a better place by working together as sisters and brothers in finding long-term solutions to global issues.

This year, the theme asks us to think about the great 'yes' that Mary spoke when the angel told her she was to become the mother of Jesus. She freely accepted God's invitation to take up a unique place in the history of the human family. The prayer Mary shared with her cousin Elizabeth says, "all generations will call me blessed". Her 'yes' is for all future generations.

Project Compassion 2023 brings us the stories of four incredibly inspiring individuals whose futures have been touched by the relentless work of our partners

and by your unwavering generosity. There is the story of 16-year-old Laxmi, who lives in one of the most remote communities in Nepal. After losing her father at a young age, she was vulnerable to falling further into extreme poverty. But thanks to your generosity, and the support of our partner Caritas Nepal, Laxmi joined a child club, became a leader in her school and is now a mentor to other girls in her village.

This year, we are also bringing you the story Thu from Vietnam who, with the support of the Centre for Sustainable Rural Development, can now earn extra income and care for his wife despite his disability. There is also the story of Priscilla from Zimbabwe. Thanks to your support, she has had the opportunity to learn conservation farming skills to grow drought-resistant crops and farm poultry to support her family during the current food crisis. And finally, there is the story of Tereesa – a Gamilaroi woman from Western Sydney who struggled with homelessness while raising her four children. Through the Baabayn Young Mums and Bubs program, she was able to reconnect with her culture and create a better future for her children.

On behalf of everyone at Caritas Australia, I want to thank your parish for your ongoing compassion and support towards the work that we do. These inspiring stories are living proof that your generosity can make a life-changing impact and create better opportunities so that future generations may live to their full potential and thrive.

With gratitude,

*Kirsty Robertson*

**Kirsty Robertson**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Caritas Australia

# YOUR GUIDE TO PROJECT COMPASSION

HERE ARE SUGGESTIONS TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR YOUR PARISH TO LINK LENT, LITURGY AND LIFE THIS LENTEN SEASON. CHECKLISTS ARE PROVIDED TO HELP YOU PLAN AND KEEP TRACK OF YOUR ACTIVITIES.

## BEFORE PROJECT COMPASSION (PC23) BEGINS

### ASH WEDNESDAY

Each year Project Compassion brings together thousands of Australians in schools, parishes and the community to stand in solidarity with the world's most vulnerable communities, to help end poverty, promote justice and uphold dignity.

The theme of Project Compassion is *For All Future Generations*. It reminds us that what we do today can have an impact *For All Future Generations*. This message invites us to step up for those who do not have the essential resources they need for their survival and those whose needs at this time are far beyond ours. By putting compassion into action, we can make a difference today, *For All Future Generations*.

We hope that the resources we provide help you bring Project Compassion to life in your parish, making it an inspiring and rewarding experience for everyone.

### CHECKLIST

- **MATERIALS RECEIVED?** Do you have all the materials ordered for your parish? If you have any queries, or need additional resources, please contact your Diocesan Director.
- **PC23 USB PASSED ON** to the relevant person in your parish (e.g. parish secretary or parish representative)?
- **WATCH & SHARE THE PC23 USB AND MATERIALS** with your parish liturgy committee/social justice group?

## PROJECT COMPASSION BEGINS CHECKLIST

Project Compassion Sunday is the Sunday before Ash Wednesday. Get your Project Compassion 2023 activities off to a good start, ensuring your whole parish is familiar with Project Compassion 2023's theme: *For All Future Generations*.

### CHECKLIST

- **DISTRIBUTE BOXES AND DONATION ENVELOPES:** If possible, offer these to parishioners individually, either as people leave the church, or after Communion, signifying the link between saying 'Amen' to the Body of Christ and 'being' the Body of Christ in the world today.
- **TALK ABOUT PC23:** Deliver one of the Project Compassion Sunday talks provided (visit [www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion](http://www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion)).
- **SHOW FILMS:** Watch the Project Compassion films to meet the people featured in Project Compassion this year. Films can be found on USB or visit [www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion](http://www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion)

*Note: The films have subtitles for parishioners with hearing impairments. You can also show a short film version, which introduces Project Compassion and the 2023 Lenten Stories.*

## PROJECT COMPASSION DURING LENT

We offer four feature stories for you to use through Lent. In 2023, Project Compassion focuses on the theme *For All Future Generations* and the stories explain the issues faced in each of the countries featured.

The stories highlight how Caritas Australia is working together with vulnerable people, empowering them to develop their strengths and create change in their own community.

### CHECKLIST

- **BULLETIN NOTICE:** Insert the Project Compassion bulletin notice in your weekly parish bulletin (this can be found on your USB).
- **USE LENT REFLECTIONS AND PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION:** See the weekly reflections in this booklet and the PC23 USB.
- **SHOW THE SHORT PC23 FILMS** to meet some Project Compassion program participants and hear their personal success stories. A popular time is just before the beginning or end of Mass each week.
- **DISTRIBUTE BOXES AND DONATION ENVELOPES** to any parishioners who weren't at Mass on Project Compassion Sunday and to your social justice group and other committees.
- **DISPLAY POSTERS** prominently in your church, other Mass centres & meeting rooms.
- **PRINT THE PROJECT COMPASSION STORIES** on the PC23 USB in your bulletin if space permits, or add an extra page if possible (they are available in different lengths).
- **CREATE YOUR PARISH FUNDRAISING PAGE:** Go to [www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion](http://www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion) and register your parish Project Compassion fundraising page.

## EASTER SUNDAY

On the last Sunday of Lent, remind parishioners to participate in Project Compassion.

### CHECKLIST

- **DISTRIBUTE** Easter envelopes on seats, after Mass or as people leave on **Easter Sunday**.
- **PRINT** a bulletin notice inviting participation in Project Compassion by “visiting parishioners” for those who haven’t been able to participate previously. Example: *“If you didn’t have a Project Compassion box/envelopes during Lent, envelopes on the seats enable you to participate today. All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.”*

## AFTER EASTER SUNDAY

**THANK YOU:** Thank all who have supported Project Compassion in your parish.

### CHECKLIST

- **Turn over your Project Compassion poster** to display the “Thank You” poster on the other side.
- **Put a reminder in the parish bulletin:** Place a note in your April and May parish bulletins for donations to be handed in.
- **Put a Thank You in the parish bulletin:** Publish a final “Thank You” Bulletin Notice announcing the total amount raised.
- **Forward your donations** and Record of Receipts sheet to Caritas Australia before **31 May 2023**.



## HELP WITH RECEIPTING & PARISH DONATION REMITTANCE

The PC23 USB offers you a guide to remittance procedures and contains example receipts and an Excel Record of Receipts sheet.

Paper Tax receipts and Record of Receipts sheets are also included in your materials (or are available from your Diocesan Director).

Encourage parishioners to donate via credit card, to minimise parish receipting time. They can place their credit card details on the weekly donation envelopes or single Easter donation envelope.

If you are unable to use the Excel spreadsheet version on the PC23 USB, your Diocesan Director can provide tax receipts for parishioners, remittance information, and additional printed Record of Receipts sheets. The details of your Diocesan Director can be found on the back of this booklet.

## NEED SOMEONE TO HELP PROMOTE PROJECT COMPASSION?

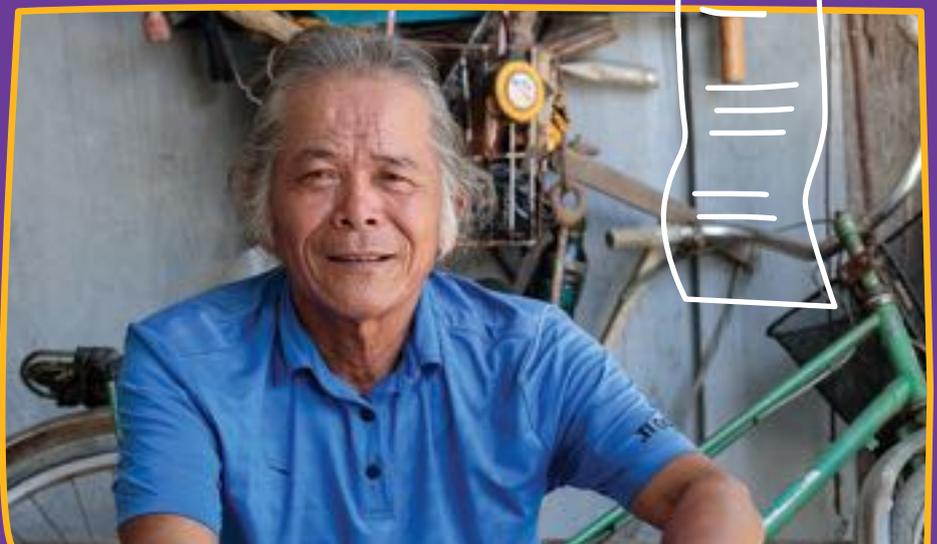
Your Diocesan Director is also happy to assist. You can find their contact details on the back of this booklet.



## RECEIPTS

Please forward your donations to Caritas Australia before 31 May 2023 with your Record of Receipts sheet.

You can also transfer donations by electronic funds transfer. Call us on 1800 024 413 for details.



# PRAYER



**God of all generations,  
We thank you for those who have gone before us,  
especially those who have cared for your earth and  
who inspire us to help respect your creation  
and contribute to its healing.**

**We thank you for those with whom we share our lives today,  
especially those who work for justice and peace.  
May we welcome the opportunity that Lent brings  
to walk more closely with you,  
especially through fasting, almsgiving and prayer.**

**We thank you for the challenge of the future.  
May the cross of Jesus remind us that only love finds the way forward.  
As we work with big hearts, may we join with Mary in her hope  
that from now on all generations will experience  
the great things you will do through us.  
We ask this in Jesus' name.**

**Amen.**



**IN THE NEXT SECTION OF THIS BOOKLET, YOU WILL FIND REFLECTIONS AND PRAYERS FOR EACH SUNDAY OF LENT.**

# REFLECTIONS AND PRAYERS

All reflections written by Michael McGirr



## PROJECT COMPASSION SUNDAY REFLECTION WEEKEND OF 18-19 FEBRUARY 2023



LAXMI, NEPAL



PRISCILLA, ZIMBABWE

Yes is a wonderful word but it can be misused. People who live in fear often feel compelled to say yes because they are too frightened to say anything else. Even people who take on too much might find themselves getting tangled up because they feel they have to say yes to everything. Saying *no* might actually be a more genuine form of yes. Perhaps you need to say no to the expectations of others in order to truly say yes to life and to God. Scripture is full of people whose yes to God was confusing to others.

Today's readings ask us to think about the word yes. In the reading from the Book of Leviticus, we are asked to say yes to our neighbour. The reading from the letter to the Corinthians says that the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God. Our faith means saying yes to a very different approach to life. Finally, in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus tells us to forget about revenge, to stop our dog-eat-dog mentality, and to say yes to forgiveness and generosity. Indeed, we have to say yes to our enemies.

These are great readings to take with us into Lent, which starts this week with Ash Wednesday. Lent is the time of year during which we journey with Jesus towards the great yes he said with his whole being when he died on the cross. Jesus was prepared to say yes to his father, yes to life even if it meant death.

Lent is a time when we support the work of Caritas Australia in a special way through Project Compassion. Caritas Australia helps to empower some of our most marginal sisters and brothers; it embraces some demanding situations because it says yes to our neighbours.

The theme for Project Compassion is *For All Future Generations*. This year, that theme asks us to think about the great yes that Mary said when the angel told her that she was to become the mother of Jesus. She freely accepted a unique place in the history of the human family.

The great prayer she shared with her cousin Elizabeth, says 'all generations will call me blessed.' Her 'yes' is *For All Future Generations*. Hopefully, ours can be the same.

## PRAYER OF INTERCESSION



We pray for the ability to understand that God's wisdom is greater than ours. May our support for Project Compassion enable us to join Mary in saying yes to God's plan of justice for the whole human family.

# ASH WEDNESDAY REFLECTION



TERESA,  
AUSTRALIA



THU,  
VIETNAM

It was not many years ago that every school and parish had an incinerator. At our school, one of the jobs of the class monitor was to take out the trash and set fire to it. It is uncomfortable to think now about how much soot we put into the atmosphere. Not to mention the fumes of burning plastic and other things. The word recycling was still a few years away; frankly, it's a pity it didn't enter our vocabulary a bit sooner.

One time, two members of our class decided to start throwing ash at each other. They made an unholy mess and ended up looking like wrecks. The teacher made them write out fifty times the line from today's Psalm: 'O wash me more and more from my guilt.' With benefit of hindsight, I can see that the Psalm has bigger things on its mind than ten-year-olds getting dirty in the incinerator. The focus of the Psalm is far more on God's mercy and kindness

than our silly behaviour. It asks for strength, a 'steadfast spirit.' It also asks for the gift of intimacy with God. 'Do not cast me away from your presence.'

Later, I discovered that at school the teachers used ashes from the incinerator to place on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday. I don't think this was the correct procedure and was, I think, a matter of convenience. Yet it does seem to make a point. When we receive the ashes, we are asked to remember that we are dust and will return to dust. The journey of Lent takes in hope from a place of humility to one of light. The things we throw away, the people we disregard, are the very place we can encounter God.

Project Compassion, organised by Caritas Australia, is a great way of embracing the journey of Lent. It asks us to remember that there are people

in the world who are often treated like rubbish. Metaphorically, they live among the ashes. Our decisions can make a huge impact on helping them journey with hope into light. The rituals of Ash Wednesday have a special meaning for all of us. They call us to recognise the humanity we share with others and to return with our hearts to the God of justice. Like Mary, we are called to be a blessing for all generations to come.



## PRAYER OF INTERCESSION



We pray for all who are trying to rise from the ashes in their lives. May our support for Project Compassion remind us that now is the time to turn to the Lord with all our hearts and embrace the needs of God's whole family.

**"GOD'S LOVE CALLS US TO MOVE BEYOND FEAR. WE ASK GOD FOR THE COURAGE TO PUT ON FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE AS WE GO OUT INTO THE WORLD AND BECOME THE WORD IN BODY AS WELL AS SPIRIT."**

**POPE FRANCIS**

# 1ST SUNDAY OF LENT

## WEEKEND OF 25-26 FEBRUARY 2023

LAXMI'S STORY,  
NEPAL



**16-year-old Laxmi lives in one of the most remote communities in Nepal which experiences high levels of poverty.**

Laxmi's chance at a better life was through education, supported by her parents. Sadly, when she was 10 years old, her father passed away and Laxmi stopped going to school.

Before her father's passing, Laxmi joined a child's club at her school that was run with the support of Caritas Nepal, through the Nepal Livelihoods and Resilience Program. Child's clubs support students to develop their speaking, writing and leadership skills through extracurricular activities.

Thanks to the support of her child's club, Laxmi was encouraged to resume her education. She became an active member of her child's club, where she developed the skills and confidence to become a leader, advocating for clean water taps at her school.

*"If I don't get to study, then I'll experience hardship. I'll have to struggle like mother. If I don't get to study, then I'll have no knowledge,"* Laxmi said.

Laxmi is now excelling in her studies and working towards her dream of becoming a civil engineer. She has become a mentor to other girls in her village, encouraging them to stand up for their rights and creating lasting change *For All Future Generations*.



## REFLECTION

Nelson Mandela said that education was the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world. There are plenty of people who would agree with him. One of them is Oprah Winfrey who said that education was the way to move mountains, build bridges and to change the world.

Today's readings certainly suggest the value of reading. The story from the Book of Genesis comes from pre-history. It has often been misunderstood to suggest that sin entered the world through one woman. This is not true. On the contrary, the readings tell us that the world is good. When humans try to overstretch their boundaries, trouble follows and the experience of beauty and harmony is threatened. We need to choose our teachers. Are we going to listen to God or the serpent? In our modern world, the serpent takes many forms. There are many threats to the harmony of the human race and the beauty of our natural environment.

Likewise, today's story of the temptations in the wilderness from Matthew's Gospel shows us that some lessons are difficult. Jesus actually teaches the devil. He tells the evil one that God is in charge. Jesus has to decide which voices he will follow. He has to learn that some ideas may

not be as good as they sound. All the kingdoms of the world, Jesus learns, are no substitute for an honest and life-giving relationship with God.

Each week during Lent, Caritas Australia asks us to think about a special story. The story focuses on someone who has benefitted from your generosity through Project Compassion. This week, we hear about 16-year-old Laxmi who lives in a remote part of Nepal. Your help has enabled her to overcome family hardship to pursue her education. She was tempted to give up on school. But Project Compassion enabled her to follow a more positive direction and to realise what she could achieve for her community by becoming an engineer. The evil spirit will always get us to focus on what we don't have. The spirit of light will show us what is truly possible.



**DON'T FORGET**  
TO CREATE YOUR PARISH  
FUNDRAISING PAGE AT:  
[WWW.CARITAS.ORG.AU/  
PROJECT-COMPASSION](http://WWW.CARITAS.ORG.AU/PROJECT-COMPASSION)

## PRAYER OF INTERCESSION



**We pray for all involved in the ministry of education. Like Jesus may they be clear, courageous and strong as they pass values of compassion and justice to future generations. May our support for Project Compassion continue to make education more widely available.**

## FUNDRAISING IDEA

Ask your parish representative or volunteer to distribute the Project Compassion donation boxes and envelopes to parishioners after communion or as they leave Mass today, and encourage them to put their compassion into action *For All Future Generations*.

## BULLETIN NOTICE

You can help to improve the lives of children like Laxmi by making a donation through Project Compassion boxes and envelopes, visiting [www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion](http://www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion) or phoning 1800 024 413.

# 2ND SUNDAY OF LENT WEEKEND OF 4-5 MARCH 2023

## REFLECTION



Think for a moment about some of the things you have on your walls at home. They don't have to be fancy or expensive. They might be photos of your family or perhaps of deceased grandparents. They might be prints of famous paintings or posters with sayings that mean a lot to you. It is very common that Christians have special things: crucifixes or images of saints.

All of these things inspire us in one way or another. If ever you have had to pack up to move house and looked at your bare walls as you leave, they will seem empty and colourless. Art is one of the things that transfigures our world and makes it more beautiful. Other things do this as well: laughter, tears, cooking, music, hugs and sharing stories. They all transfigure our houses and allow us to see them as homes. They unlock the true potential of an otherwise ordinary space.

This week Project Compassion, organised by Caritas Australia, presents us with the story of Teresa, a 27-year old Indigenous woman from western Sydney, the area with the largest urban Indigenous population in the country. Teresa became pregnant at the age of 16. With your help, Project Compassion has been able to support the Mums and Bubs program run by Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation. This allowed Teresa to

find accommodation, gain skills and continue her education. She was also able to connect with her culture. Her glorious artwork was featured on the Wulugul Walk during Sydney's Vivid Festival last year. Her use of light and colour transfigured the environment where it was displayed. In so many places, Project Compassion helps people to achieve their vision.

Of course, the transfiguration of Jesus is unique. We hear in today's Gospel that Jesus took his closest friends to the top of a high mountain. His face shone like the sun and his face became 'as white as the light.' A voice from heaven said "this is my beloved son; listen to him." Peter said how wonderful it was to be there. The transfiguration may have only lasted a few minutes but it was clear that Jesus' friends never forgot it. Like a work of art on a wall, the memory made the world seem very different. During Lent, we are also called to transfigure the world, to make a difference.

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PROJECT-COMPASSION](http://WWW.CARITAS.ORG.AU/PROJECT-COMPASSION)

## PRAYER OF INTERCESSION



We pray for all people who are a source of hope in the world, who help to transfigure darkness into light. May our support of Project Compassion help to keep alive our vision of Christ as the one we should most listen to, the light of the world.

## FUNDRAISING IDEA

Each Sunday, play the short film introducing that week's featured story (found on the Project Compassion USB) to highlight the positive impact your community is making. Integrate weekly stories, reflections and prayers into Mass (found in this booklet and on the USB) to further emphasise how your community's donations are transforming the lives of vulnerable people around the world.

## BULLETIN NOTICE

You can help people like Teresa continue to thrive by making a donation through Project Compassion boxes and envelopes, visiting [www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion](http://www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion) or phoning 1800 024 413.

## TERESA'S STORY, AUSTRALIA



A young Gamilaroi woman born and raised on Darug land, Teresa felt disconnected from her culture. At just 16 years old, she had to leave school after falling pregnant with her first child. A single mother struggling with homelessness, Teresa's only concern was finding stability for her children.

"I was homeless. I didn't have a place to call home...my kids never had a connection to the community," Teresa said.

Seeking a better future for her children, Teresa joined Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation's Young Mums and Bubs program, supported by Caritas Australia. Baabayn helped Teresa access housing for her family and psychological support.

Through the program Teresa reconnected with her culture through Indigenous art. Her artistic skills flourished, and her artwork was chosen for the Vivid Festival in Sydney in 2022.

"I don't think I'd be the person I am today without Baabayn and being part of the mum's group has brought out a lot of creativity in my bones that I didn't even know I had," Teresa said.

Today, Teresa works at Baabayn, providing support to young mothers and mentoring the next generation of young people.



# 3RD SUNDAY OF LENT WEEKEND OF 11-12 MARCH 2023

**PRISCILLA'S STORY,  
ZIMBABWE**



**Climate change continues to bring unprecedented challenges for people living in the most vulnerable and remote communities in Zimbabwe.**

Priscilla lives with her husband and two grandchildren in the Hwange region. With the support of Caritas Hwange, Priscilla and her community learnt conservation farming to grow drought-resistant crops.

Her increased harvest allowed Priscilla to sell her crops and start poultry farming, selling eggs to grow her income stream and pay for her grandchildren's education. Caritas Hwange also helped rehabilitate the dip tank in her community so that Priscilla's cattle can be healthy and free from tick-borne diseases.

While the situation in Zimbabwe and across eastern Africa remains dire, the work of Caritas Hwange has helped Priscilla acquire the knowledge and skills she needs to diversify her income and support her family during the current food crisis.

*"Today we have knowledge and skills that we didn't have before and are able to use to earn a living," Priscilla said.*



## REFLECTION

Every summer seems to get a little longer and a little hotter. We have all become conscious of issues surrounding water. Either there seems to be too much, as during last year's summer floods or when the sea levels rise in the Pacific. Other times, there seems to be too little water as when the rivers in our country run low or members of God's family around the world experience drought. Caritas Australia, through Project Compassion, has been responding to the dire needs of places such as Ethiopia and Somalia where a cruel drought, compounded by a shortage of grain from Ukraine, has led to dire consequences.

Today's readings may well cause us to reflect on the current state of God's creation. In the book of Exodus, we hear that people are complaining to Moses because they are dying of thirst. In the Gospel, Jesus meets a woman in a Samaritan town. She has come to draw water from the well in the hottest part of the day. In both cases, access to water is precarious. Yet God responds not only to a thirst for water but to a deeper thirst as well. Moses' people are thirsty for direction, leadership and hope. The woman in John's Gospel has a thirst for love and acceptance which, Jesus tells her, will come from within if she is able to accept him and his message of life.

As the story unfolds, we learn of her loneliness and see her reconnecting with her community.

This week, Caritas Australia shares with us an account of its response to a water shortage in Zimbabwe. Thanks to our support for Project Compassion, Caritas Australia is involved in providing access to water in many places. It seems such a basic thing. One we mostly take for granted. But once a community has access to water, it grows in every possible way. People have more time for health care and education. People find energy to build their future. This week's scripture readings have a strong sense of a hope-filled future. May we too, in our time, be sources of hope *For All Future Generations.*



**DON'T FORGET**

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[WWW.CARITAS.ORG.AU/  
PROJECT-COMPASSION](http://WWW.CARITAS.ORG.AU/PROJECT-COMPASSION)**

## PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

**We pray that all people will have just access to the necessities of life, especially water. May we, in our support for Project Compassion this Lent, do all we can to become a source of hope for those who thirst.**



## FUNDRAISING IDEA

Reinforce the importance of Project Compassion by drawing parishioners' attention to the 'What Your Donation Can Do' poster displayed in your parish. Reveal your parish's fundraising total so far and thank everyone for their generosity. Use the poster to explain how their donations can greatly benefit communities around the world.

**"LET US PRAY FOR  
PEACE: PEACE IN THE  
WORLD AND IN EACH  
OF OUR HEARTS."**

**POPE FRANCIS**

# 4TH SUNDAY OF LENT

## WEEKEND OF 18-19 MARCH 2023

**THU'S STORY,  
VIETNAM**

### REFLECTION

There are many occasions when we ask the question why and can't find the answer for which we are looking. Why did we miss out on a job? Why did someone we love get cancer? Why can't we find a place to live that we can afford? Why do some days seem so difficult?

It is good to sit with our confusion and even grief. It is good to share it with the Lord who loves us so tenderly. But sometimes we have to step aside from the question *why did this happen?* It may be better to start with *where can I go from here?* What small steps will enable me to face the future in a positive spirit?

Today's readings touch upon these issues. In the Gospel, Jesus encounters a person who was born blind. The bystanders want to know why this happened. They think it must be because either he or his parents did something wrong. They are looking backwards. Jesus prefers to look forward. He says *"he was born blind so that the works of God may be displayed in him."* In other words, his blindness presents opportunities for growth, not a pretext for blame. The letter to the Ephesians similarly reminds us that we are on a journey from darkness to light. The whole of Lent could be described in those words. The letter says 'try to discover

what the Lord wants of you.' It asks us in terms of possibilities! The same thing happens when Samuel anoints David. It doesn't matter that David is a young shepherd. He has a big future, as anyone familiar with the Bible well knows.

This week Project Compassion shares with us the story of Thu, who lives in Vietnam. At the age of 12, Thu's life was thrown into chaos when he trod on a land mine that had been left behind after the Vietnam War. Surely, he must have asked why he was among the unlucky ones. He might have asked the same thing again when his wife suffered a stroke. But Thu joined the Empowerment of People with Disabilities program, supported by Caritas Australia through our local partners, the Centre for Sustainable Rural Development. As with so many others, your generosity enabled Thu and his family to build a brighter future. Thank you for helping in this wonderful work of transformation.

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**When Thu was 12 years old, he lost his leg after 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 carer for his wife.**

*"She is my wife and we have been living together and depending on each other, I am the one to be there with her and for her,"* Thu said.

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 and joined a Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) where he could interact with other people with disabilities and earn income through 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 project also helped Thu to build an accessible toilet for Linh, who has become more independent thanks to the support of a physiotherapist.

### PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

**We pray for those who live in confusion and doubt. May we try to support positive approaches to even the most difficult problems, such as the partnerships created by Caritas Australia through Project Compassion.**



### FUNDRAISING IDEA

Host an information night to raise awareness of vulnerable people around the world. Visit [www.caritas.org.au](http://www.caritas.org.au) for some discussion points to get the conversation flowing!

### BULLETIN NOTICE

You can help to support people like Thu forge a path out of poverty by making a donation through Project Compassion boxes and envelopes, or by visiting [www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion](http://www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion) or phoning 1800 024 413.



# 5TH SUNDAY OF LENT WEEKEND OF 25TH-26TH MARCH

## WHAT IS PROJECT COMPASSION?



### FOR ALL FUTURE GENERATIONS

Project Compassion is Caritas Australia's main annual fundraising campaign. It mobilises Australians to raise much-needed funds to help alleviate poverty, promote justice and uphold dignity in the most marginalised communities in the world.

Spanning across the six weeks of Lent each year, Project Compassion brings thousands of Australian schools, parishes and supporters together to stand in solidarity with people living in vulnerable communities across Asia, Africa, the Pacific and with First Nations people in Australia.

Project Compassion is a demonstration of the faith, empathy and generosity of our supporters. It is the lifeblood of Caritas Australia – without it, we could not do the vital work that we do.

The theme of Project Compassion is *For All Future Generations*. This year, we focus on the stories of four remarkable, resilient people from Nepal, Zimbabwe, Vietnam and Australia. Each of these stories demonstrates the powerful impact that each one of us can have *For All Future Generations*.



## REFLECTION

It must be difficult for somebody who has never experienced love to understand the Gospels. They are so full of different emotions, many of them tender. Just think of the beautiful reconciliation between Jesus and Peter after the resurrection. Jesus allows Peter to say that he loves him on no less than three occasions. Thankfully, most of us can write down a long list of people we have loved and also of those who have loved us. Many names would appear on both lists! We keep a special place in our hearts and prayers for the people we know who have died. Even after a long time, their memory will still bring a tear to our eyes. That sorrow comes from a place of deep gratitude. God changes the world one heart at a time.

When we encounter today's Gospel, the story of the raising of Lazarus, we are in a world of emotion. Martha and Mary are grieving for their brother. Jesus loves these two women. Thomas, the twin, is full of bravado and bluster, just as he was later when he wanted proof of the resurrection. Both Martha and Mary are disappointed, even angry, that Jesus has not come sooner. Jesus weeps at the grave of his friend. The mourners who have come to comfort the family must also have been sensitive to the situation. When

Jesus says "I am the resurrection and the life" he is not explaining an idea. He is responding to the deepest longings of our hearts, as he always does. Today's Psalm reminds us 'My soul is longing for the Lord more than the watcher for daybreak.'

Over the last few weeks we have shared some of the stories presented to us by Caritas Australia to make us more aware of the inspirational work we can support through Project Compassion. There have been stories from Zimbabwe, Vietnam, Nepal and First Australians. Through your generosity, Caritas Australia is able to support partners in 18 different countries. These are all people who, not unlike Lazarus, are longing to be unbound and set free. The Gospel calls us to believe in the Life to which Jesus invites us; that Life is built on justice and compassion.



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## PRAYER OF INTERCESSION



**We give thanks for all the people who fill our lives with love. We pray for all those who do not feel loved, especially those yet to appreciate the depth of God's love. May our support for Project Compassion be a sign to others of the love of God for all people.**

## FUNDRAISING IDEA

Ask your parishioners to bring in a meal or light refreshments to share after mass. Discuss what impact basic schooling has on the most vulnerable around the world. Ask the question, "where would you be now if you didn't receive schooling?"

## BULLETIN NOTICE

You can help by making a donation through Project Compassion boxes and envelopes, visiting [www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion](http://www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion) or phoning 1800 024 413.

# PALM SUNDAY WEEKEND OF 1-2 APRIL

## HOLY WEEK

### REFLECTION

It is only once in every three years that we publicly share together Matthew's full account of the arrest, trial and death of Jesus. Today is that day. Matthew's passion is rich in every sense of the word. It is the longest account of what Jesus endured and it also has the most diverse cast of characters. Only Matthew devotes time not only to the tragic fate of Judas, who was filled with remorse, but even to the thirty pieces of silver that were used to buy a cemetery for foreigners called the Field of Blood. Only Matthew tells us about the dream of Pilate's wife which leads her to send a message to her husband that he should have nothing to do with Jesus. Matthew's Gospel features a number of dreams. Joseph is told in a dream to take Mary as his wife, to flee with his family to Egypt and later to return from Egypt. Dreams are one of the many links between Matthew's Gospel and the Hebrew scriptures.

This is by no means to say that Matthew's Gospel is merely an interesting piece of literature. It is only to suggest that, in Holy Week, Matthew's Passion is a wonderful encounter to enter slowly as we spend time with the Lord, allowing the mystery of the cross to deepen

within us. One commitment we might make is to take a section each day this week and stay with it for ten minutes.

*Monday: Mt 26: 14-35*

*Tuesday: Mt 26: 36-56*

*Wednesday: Mt 26: 57-75*

*Thursday: Mt 27: 1-26*

*Friday: Mt 27: 27-56*

*Saturday: Mt 27: 57-66*

The trial and death of Jesus reminds us of the tragedy of injustice that continues to this day in so many places around the world. Throughout Lent, Caritas Australia, through Project Compassion, has attempted to draw our attention to many important issues in our world. We have been invited to take up the cross and follow Jesus in our own time. We can pray, with Jesus, *'Let it be as you, not I, would have it.'*



### DON'T FORGET

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It's through the generosity of people like you that we can continue to support people like Laxmi, Teresa, Priscilla and Thu.

The funds you raise can help vulnerable communities around the world improve their access to food and clean water, support education and skills training, help families to increase their income and provide training in disaster risk reduction. Together, we can continue to transform lives today – and *For All Future Generations.*



### PRAYER OF INTERCESSION



We pray that the mystery of the death of Jesus will deepen within our hearts. May we be ready to take up the cross in our time, especially as we support those who experience injustice throughout the world.

### FUNDRAISING IDEA

Encourage each parishioner to donate on Easter Sunday using the Project Compassion Easter Envelope distributed by a volunteer at the door as parishioners enter or leave Mass (contact your Diocesan Director for envelopes if these have not been provided). Remember to turn over your Project Compassion poster after Easter to show the Project Compassion Thank You poster, acknowledging the generosity of parishioners this year.

### BULLETIN NOTICE

You can help by making a donation through Project Compassion boxes and envelopes, or visit [www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion](http://www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion) or phone 1800 024 413.

**"WHEN I FINISH  
MY STUDIES,  
I WANT TO  
GET RID OF  
MY MOTHER'S  
STRUGGLES."**

**LAXMI**

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

## WE ARE HERE TO HELP



### YOUR CONTACT FOR PROJECT COMPASSION

Through your generosity during Project Compassion this year, you are assisting some of the world's most vulnerable people build better futures for themselves, their families and their communities – **For All Generations!** Thank you so much for being part of Project Compassion 2023! Here are the contact details for Caritas staff who can help with your wonderful work.

#### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TEAM

##### NEW SOUTH WALES/ AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

**Christopher Nolan**  
chris.nolan@caritas.org.au  
0429 368 855

##### VICTORIA/TASMANIA

**Michael McGirr**  
Mission Facilitator  
michael.mcgirr@caritas.org.au  
0437 118 637

##### QUEENSLAND/ NORTHERN TERRITORY

**Andrew Knife**  
andrew.knife@caritas.org.au  
0428 259 439

##### SOUTH AUSTRALIA/ WESTERN AUSTRALIA

**Deacon Paul Reid**  
paul.reid@caritas.org.au  
0437 978 299

#### CARITAS AUSTRALIA'S DIOCESAN CONTACTS

##### ADELAIDE

**Tracey Tessitore**  
caritas@adelaide.catholic.org.au  
08 8210 8172

##### ARMIDALE

**Georgina Franklin**  
caritasDD@armidale.catholic.org.au  
02 6771 8700

##### BALLARAT

**Jillian Hogbin**  
caritas@ballarat.catholic.org.au  
03 5337 7171

##### BATHURST

**Deacon Josh Clayton and  
Carmen Beard**  
caritas@bathurst.catholic.org.au  
02 6334 6407

##### BRISBANE

**Andrew Knife**  
andrew.knife@caritas.org.au  
0428 259 439

##### BROKEN BAY

**Chris Nolan**  
chris.nolan@caritas.org.au  
0429 368 855

##### BROOME

**Deacon Paul Reid**  
paul.reid@caritas.org.au  
0437 978 299

##### BUNBURY

**Peter Williams**  
caritas@bunburycatholic.org.au  
08 9721 0500

##### CAIRNS

**Andrew Knife**  
andrew.knife@caritas.org.au  
0428 259 439

##### CANBERRA & GOULBURN

**Beth Doherty**  
elisabeth\_doherty@hotmail.com  
0432 608 310

##### DARWIN

**Rev Deacon Tony Cunningham**  
tc21qual@googlemail.com  
0407 549 708

##### GERALDTON

**Rosemary Taylor**  
plm@diocese-geraldton.org  
08 9964 2716

##### HOBART

**Michael Smith**  
michael.smith@aohtas.org.au  
0403 741 913

##### LISMORE

**Deacon Graeme Davis**  
graemerdavis@bigpond.com  
0417 241 564

##### MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

**Teresa Brierley**  
teresa.brierley@mn.catholic.org.au  
02 4979 1157

##### MARONITE EPARCHY

**Rev Fr Tony Sarkis**  
frtonysarkis@maronite.org.au  
02 9642 0211

##### MELBOURNE

**Romina Martiniello**  
romina.martiniello@caritas.org.au  
0437 118 637

##### PARRAMATTA

**Sebastian Salaske-Lentern**  
pje@parracatholic.org  
0409 399 505

##### PERTH

**Deacon Paul Reid**  
paul.reid@caritas.org.au  
0437 978 299

##### PORT PIRIE

**Mary Manning**  
mary.manning@cc.catholic.edu.au  
0427 506 579

##### ROCKHAMPTON

**Andrew Knife**  
andrew.knife@caritas.org.au  
0428 259 439

##### SALE

**Cathy Dougan**  
pa@sale.catholic.org.au  
03 5622 6682

##### SANDHURST

**Fr Rom Hayes/Kerry Stone**  
kmstone@bigpond.net.au  
0408 579 904

##### SYDNEY

**Chris Nolan**  
chris.nolan@caritas.org.au  
0429 368 855

##### TOOWOOMBA

**Andrew Knife**  
andrew.knife@caritas.org.au  
0428 259 439

##### TOWNSVILLE

**Neil Helmore**  
nhelmore@tsv.catholic.org.au  
07 4726 3251

##### UKRAINIAN EPARCHY

**Very Rev Archpriest Michael Kalka**  
michael.kalka@cam.org.au  
03 9853 6701

##### WAGGA WAGGA

**Karen Williams**  
KWilliams@wagga.catholic.org.au  
02 6937 0003

##### WILCANNIA-FORBES

**Trish Cleal**  
trish.cleal@wf.catholic.org.au  
0439 414 055

##### WOLLONGONG

**Debbie Gates**  
debbie.gates@dow.org.au  
02 4222 2446



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Please note: There may be changes in contact names after this booklet is printed. If you aren't sure whom to approach, please phone 1800 024 413 (toll-free).



End poverty  
Promote justice  
Uphold dignity

Caritas Australia Head Office  
Level 2, Building 3, 189 O'Riordan Street, Mascot,  
NSW, 2020, CM 23300458  
Phone (toll free): 1800 024 413  
[www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion](http://www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion)

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