



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

BISHOPS CALL ON CHURCH TO GET BEHIND CARITAS AUSTRALIA'S EAST AFRICA CRISIS APPEAL

Media Release

July 25, 2011

Today, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) calls on the Australian community to pledge support for Caritas Australia's East Africa Crisis Appeal.

"Our brothers and sisters in East Africa are in the grip of a grave humanitarian crisis. As prolonged drought and extreme food insecurity threaten the lives of millions, we must be steadfast in our compassionate support," said ACBC President Archbishop Philip Wilson said.

We encourage parishes across Australia to show support this Sunday, by coming together to pray for the people of East Africa and to support the Caritas Australia East Africa Crisis Appeal.

For forty years, Caritas Australia has worked on behalf of the Australian Catholic community to create development opportunities for the poorest of the poor. In East Africa the international Caritas network is already on the ground doing the vital work of providing food, water, first aid and agricultural assistance, Archbishop Wilson said.

"The Australian Catholic Community is committed to protecting the human dignity of all those who are threatened by the drought in East Africa. Thanks to the generosity and support of the Australian community, Caritas is delivering urgent assistance in those communities most vulnerable," said Archbishop Wilson.

"In the giving of alms to Caritas Australia's East Africa Crisis Appeal, you will help Caritas alleviate human suffering in what has been described as the greatest humanitarian crisis on Earth today.

"Children are literally starving to death which is very difficult for us to comprehend. Two million children have been described as acutely malnourished and close to 11 million people in eight countries have been identified as at risk."

With utmost commitment to the dignity of the human person, Caritas Australia has asked us stand in solidarity with drought-affected communities. Your contribution will enable Caritas Australia to champion the human dignity and rights of all people, to amplify the voice of the poorest in East Africa and to accompany the most vulnerable communities as they map a route out of debilitating poverty.

"Take with humility your next meal and never forget the millions of mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers in East Africa who will consider themselves blessed if even the smallest bowl of food appears before them," said Archbishop Wilson.

“For our brothers and sisters in East Africa, the most basic human right – food – has become an elusive luxury.

“As Catholics, we cannot simply stand by and allow these communities to endure such dehumanising suffering. As expressed by Father Pedro Arrupe SJ: ‘If there is hunger anywhere in the world, then our celebration of the Eucharist is somehow incomplete everywhere in the world.’”

“Our faith in Jesus Christ leads us to follow in his example of compassion for the poor. The Australian Catholic Bishops wholeheartedly support this essential work of the Church that takes place through our International Aid and Development agency Caritas Australia.”

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You can find out more and donate to the Caritas Australia East Africa Crisis Appeal by visiting www.caritas.org.au/eastafricacrisis or on 1800 024 413