

Project Compassion launch in Maitland-Newcastle

St Francis Xavier's College Hamilton (Newcastle) hosted the launch of Project Compassion 2011 on Shrove Tuesday. This year's theme is "Partner with us to make a difference" and the dramatization of the gospel of the Good Samaritan highlighted the theme effectively.

Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle's Director for Caritas, Catherine Stace, said, "If each person accepts the challenge to open their hearts and hands and make a donation, then communities have the opportunity to become architects of their own development. Without practising solidarity here in our own country, without our promoting justice domestically, we will never effectively change the structures which keep people trapped in the cycle of poverty."

Guest speaker at the launch was Nguyet Thi Dinh, an activist and Inclusive Education Program Manager at Catholic Relief Services in Vietnam. She spoke passionately of the difference health care, education and community development make to the poor of Vietnam.

In the words of Oscar Romero, Bishop Michael Malone challenged his audience, including representatives of most diocesan schools, to 'aspire to be more, not to have more.' "We are called to action, to stand in solidarity and be stewards of social justice. No one can do it on their own, but by partnering together anything is possible."



Left: Bishop Michael and Catherine Stace with students of St Francis Xavier's College at the launch of Project Compassion.



Above: Students from St Clare's Taree, St Joseph's Aberdeen and St Peter's Stockton attended the launch.