

Pope launches global fund for COVID-19 mission response

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Pope Francis has this week established an emergency fund in response to the COVID-19 crisis to support ongoing missionary work around the world.

Through his international mission agency, of which Catholic Mission is the Australian arm, the funds will be directed to communities hit hardest by the COVID-19 crisis.

The Emergency Fund will be used to accompany impacted communities in mission countries via Church structures and institutions.

Cardinal Luis Tagle, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples, said the fund was part of a push for solidarity in the Church. 'The Holy Father is calling upon the Church's entire vast network to face the challenges ahead.'

The establishment of the emergency fund, which was boosted by a US\$750,000 contribution, coincides with a campaign launched by Catholic Mission titled, "We Are Still Here".

It focuses on the continued presence of missionaries in communities around the world where the impact of COVID-19 is exacerbated by poverty and inequality. The campaign has raised over A\$50,000 already and will run until June 30.

'The support of our global missionary network and the critical projects they operate, including pastoral care, water, health and sanitation initiatives is as critical now as ever,' said Fr Brian Lucas, National Director of Catholic Mission. 'This is an unprecedented crisis that requires compassionate and whole-hearted support of one another.'

Archbishop Giampietro Dal Toso, President of the Pontifical Mission Societies which will administer the fund, says the missionary aspect of humanitarian support, which combines pastoral and practical outreach, is essential in this uncertain climate.

'Through the Church's activity of preaching the Gospel and of practical aid through our vast network, we can show that no one is alone in this crisis,' he said.

'In this sense, the Church's institutions and ministers play a vital role. This is the Holy Father's intention in establishing this Fund. While so many are suffering, we remember and reach out to those who may have no one to care for them, thus showing forth the love of God the Father.'

Learn how you can support the work at catholicmission.org.au.

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. Founded in Sydney in 1847, 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 take action for those on the margins. Catholic Mission has offices in 27 Australian dioceses and an active network of over 50,000 supporters.