

SUMMARY & THANK YOU

Today is Palm Sunday, which also marks the sixth week of Project Compassion. This is Caritas Australia's six week Lenten fundraising appeal.

Project Compassion is built around the theme of 'For All Future Generations'. This theme has been drawn from the story of the burning bush in Exodus 3:1-20. As God called Moses, so now God calls us to work 'for all future generations.'

This week's gospel reading reflects on the passion of Jesus Christ, his betrayal, trial, crucifixion, and his death. It paints a poignant scene where a woman anoints Jesus with costly perfume, an act of love and devotion. Shortly after, Judas agrees to betray Jesus to the chief priests.

The passage then transports us to the Last Supper, where Jesus institutes the Eucharist, and Peter's denial of Jesus. Jesus is arrested, falsely accused, and subjected to a trial filled with injustice and mockery. And despite immense suffering, he maintains his divine composure.

The crucifixion scene is heart-wrenching, portraying Jesus's sacrifice and his final moments on the cross. Darkness envelops the land as he takes his last breath. The temple curtain tears, signifying the reconciliation between God and humanity. We too are called to be agents of reconciliation.

As Project Compassion 2024 comes to an end, we take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for your incredible generosity throughout Lent.

This year, we shared with you the story of three inspiring people from different parts of the world, who faced the challenges of climate change, urban poverty and gender inequality. With your support, they are now forging a path to a better future for their families and their communities.

Ronita from the Philippines has now graduated high school and secured a job at a call centre. This job was only possible because of a certificate she gained from completing her studies. Her children, Egzy 3 and Clark 5, below, will now have access to better nutrition and education.



WAY OF THE CROSS BY POPE FRANCIS

Lord Jesus, help us to see in your Cross all the crosses of the world:

the cross of people hungry for bread and for love;

the cross of people alone and abandoned even by their children and kin;

the cross of people thirsty for justice and for peace;

the cross of people who lack the comfort of faith;

the cross of the elderly who struggle under the weight of years and of loneliness;

the cross of migrants who find doors closed in fear and hearts armoured by political calculations;

the cross of little ones, wounded in their innocence and their purity;

the cross of humanity that wanders in the darkness of uncertainty and in the obscurity of temporary culture;

the cross of families split by betrayal, by the seductions of the evil one or by homicidal leviety and selfishness;

the cross of consecrated people who tirelessly seek to bring your light into the world and feel rejected, derided and humiliated;

the cross of consecrated people who, along the way, have forgotten their first love;

the cross of your children who, while believing in you and seeking to live according to your word, find themselves marginalised and rejected even by their families and their peers;

the cross of our weaknesses, of our hypocrisy, of our betrayals, of our sins and of our many broken promises;

the cross of your Church that, faithful to your Gospel, struggles to spread your love even among the baptized themselves;

the cross of the Church, your Bride, that feels constantly assailed from within and without;

the cross of our common home that is gravely withering before our selfish eyes, blinded by greed and by power.

Lord Jesus, revive in us the hope of resurrection and of your definitive victory over all evil and all death.



Memory completed her vocational training course in carpentry and joinery. After completing a work contract at one of the largest electrical companies in Malawi, Memory now plans to return to her village and provide carpentry services to people in her community. The program also supported Memory's village with improving food security, & access to basic water and sanitation.

Finally, there is Leaia from Samoa



who can now access clean water to support the health of her family. During the next phase of the program, Caritas Samoa will work to provide hygienic toilets with septic tanks, which will further improve the health of these rural communities.

REFLECTION: Isaiah 50:4–7 | Philippians 2:6–11 | Mark 14:1–15:47 or Mark 15:1–39

We see images of the cross everywhere, from school uniforms to hospital buildings. Perhaps it is so commonplace that it doesn't stop us in our tracks the way it should. The cross of Jesus is the best key we have for understanding the mystery of God's love. God's compassion for the human family took Jesus to a lonely and brutal execution. Jesus was the victim of appalling injustice and degradation. His experience asks us to try to make the world more just and to revere the dignity of every person. 'Whatever you do to the least of my sisters and brothers, you do to me.' This is part of the reason why Project Compassion has, for 60 years, been part of our Lenten observance.

This year, Holy Week begins with the reading of the passion story from Mark's Gospel. Even in busy lives, we should try to set time aside to spend with this extraordinary story, not to rush it. Gently take a little at a time and ask for the grace to be close to Jesus. In the Spiritual Exercises, St Ignatius asks us 'to consider how the divinity hides itself.'

One way to spend time with the passion story is to take a different character each week and quietly ponder what it looked like to them and what they may have felt. Here is a suggestion:

- Sunday – Judas Iscariot
- Monday – Simon Peter
- Tuesday – The high priest
- Wednesday – Pontius Pilate
- Thursday – Simon of Cyrene
- Friday – The centurion
- Saturday – Mary of Magdala

Let us remember a beautiful prayer of just seven words that was taught to Pope Francis by his grandmother: Jesus, make my heart more like yours.



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.

Please donate to Project Compassion 2024. Together, we can help vulnerable communities face their challenges today and build a better tomorrow **for all future generations.**