



MEDIA RELEASE

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Message from the Holy See supporting Townsville community

Overnight, Most Rev. Tim Harris, Bishop of Townsville received a message from Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican Secretary of State on behalf of the Holy Father, Pope Francis.

Bishop Tim said it was encouraging that Pope Francis was aware of and praying for the people of Townsville especially those who have been affected by flooding caused by the recent extreme weather event. "Receiving this message should be a powerful message to all people in the community, knowing that Pope Francis is praying for all victims of this weather we have received in the past week" Bishop Tim said.

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2019-02/pope-s-condolences-for-flooding-vicims-in-townsville-australia.html>

"There are so many families who have lost everything. As I drive to my house which also received nearly 60cm of water through the entire property, it is heartbreaking to see the contents of their houses sitting on the street."

"People in North Queensland are amazing.

"People in the north do know these extremes, and they are resilient, no question.

"Whether they're in the city or in the west, they're realistic, they're salt of the earth people.

It's not the end of the world, of course," he said.

"Our faith kicks in and we know that God works best in the mess, and the messiness of our lives.

"God's in the midst of all this, working through all the people volunteering to help."

Bishop Harris said it was Mother Nature unleashed, not God unleashing.

He said it was now about trying to deal with the reality of the flooding.

Bishop Tim has also praised the efforts of the Townsville City Council, defence forces, Police and emergency services and the volunteers who have kept people informed and supported.

"This is an amazing city, to see so many people out helping others is a powerful message to the community, we are all in this together" he said.

Bishop Tim Harris will preside over the 10.00am Mass this Sunday at the Sacred Heart Cathedral with special prayers for the entire community as they continue to deal with the ramifications of the flooding.

For further information please contact Mr Neil Helmore, Townsville Diocesan Media Communications Officer on 0427 047 162 or email nhelmore@tsv.catholic.org.au