



Freecall: 1800 257 296
catholicmission.org.au

MEDIA RELEASE

13 January 2020

For immediate release

Catholic Mission to partner with Vinnies Bushfire Appeal

As Australia battles its worst ever bushfire and drought emergency, Catholic Mission is joining others across the country and around the world in responding to the crisis.

The mission organisation announced Monday it will partner with the St Vincent de Paul Society during the pilgrimage of St Thérèse of Lisieux and her parents Louis and Zélie Martin, commencing January 22.

Catholic Mission has reconsidered plans to raise funds for its global mission projects during the four-month pilgrimage, instead inviting those attending to give to the Vinnies Bushfire Appeal.

Father Brian Lucas, National Director of Catholic Mission, says the unique circumstances call for contingency. 'We recognise that it is difficult to focus on the need abroad when an unprecedented crisis of such scale is happening here in Australia,' he said.

'We have many supporters in badly affected dioceses across Australia and it is incumbent on us to offer a missionary response and to enable those who want to prioritise their friends, families and fellow Australians affected by these devastating bushfires to do so.'

David Harrison, Catholic Mission's Diocesan Director in Wollongong, a diocese heavily impacted by the crisis, said the local and international response has been heartening. 'Communities right down the South Coast are really doing it really tough at the moment, but it's inspiring how so many—from local parishes to celebrities—have pulled together to support those who have lost everything.'

Funeral provider InvoCare and its affiliated brands, who are joining with Catholic Mission to bring the relics to 17 Australian dioceses, have expressed full support of the move to invite Vinnies to collect donations.

Meanwhile, the extraordinary conditions across the country have led Catholic Mission to adjust its annual Seminarian Appeal, which launches in February, with an effort being made to withhold the mailed appeal from areas affected by bushfire and/or drought.

The organisation confirmed the contingency plans would not disrupt the distribution of critical funds to projects it supports throughout Africa, Asia and the Pacific. 'While we do acknowledge the gravity of the local situation, we must also respect our mission and remain committed to communities in great need around the world,' said Fr Lucas. 'Our annual Seminarian Appeal, which benefits future Church leaders in developing countries, will still raise and distribute funds for that purpose.'

To learn more about how Catholic Mission and InvoCare are partnering with the St Vincent de Paul Society during this crisis, please visit catholicmission.org.au/relics.

ENDS