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## **ANNOUNCEMENT: Suspension of Pilgrimage of St Thérèse of Lisieux relics**

- *Australian Pilgrimage of relics of St Thérèse of Lisieux to be suspended*
- *Organisers hopeful of hosting relics in three central venues (Wollongong, Canberra & Goulburn, Melbourne) with limited crowds*
- *Itinerary to be updated this week*
- *Further advice to be issued from April 13*

In light of the current situation concerning the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), and taking under consideration government and church directives, the pilgrimage of the relics of St Thérèse of Lisieux and her parents, Sts Louis and Zélie Martin, has been temporarily suspended.

Discussions are underway to host the relics in central venues across three dioceses—Wollongong, Canberra & Goulburn and Melbourne—with limited crowd numbers. A revised itinerary will be available on Catholic Mission's website shortly.

Further advice on the future of the pilgrimage is expected in the week commencing 13 April, pending a reassessment of the situation and consideration of up-to-date advice.

'Our priority is always the safety and wellbeing of our supporters and the faithful who intend to take part in the pilgrimage,' said Fr Brian Lucas, National Director of Catholic Mission. 'With that in mind and following the advice today of the federal government and health officials, we have jointly made this difficult decision.'

'We understand that this will be extremely disappointing news to many, however the situation is extraordinary, and anything less than a sensible and cautious approach would be a failure in our responsibility to our supporters. After constructive discussions with our partners in this pilgrimage, I am entirely assured that temporary suspension is the most sensible course of action.'

Updates, including possible contingency measures, can be found at [www.catholicmission.org.au](http://www.catholicmission.org.au), and by following the organisation's Facebook and Twitter accounts (@catholicmission).

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### **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.