

2 April, 2020

SINGER URGES SUPPORT TO PROTECT THE WORLD'S MOST MARGINALISED

Australian singer, songwriter and musician, Gary Pinto is urging thousands of school children, teachers, churches and families across Australia during this challenging time, to stand in solidarity with those most marginalised during Caritas Australia's Project Compassion.



Gary Pinto performed his custom-made Project Compassion theme song, "Walk with me" at St Mary's Cathedral College and Catholic school students from across New South Wales. PHOTO: DANIEL NOUR, CARITAS AUSTRALIA

Each year Caritas Australia holds its annual fundraising and awareness campaign during the six weeks of Lent, to raise money for emergency and long-term development programs that transform lives. Last year thanks to our all our supporters, including thousands of schools and communities across Australia, Caritas reached 1.52 million people directly.

Gary, who before the lockdown has been working on The Voice, has mentored many of Australia's recording artists. He has also worked as X Factor Australia's Vocal Director for the past six years, as well as on Dancing with the Stars.

Gary wrote his poignant song "Walk with me" for Caritas Australia's Project Compassion before COVID-19 became a global crisis. It focusses on walking in solidarity with those most marginalised and celebrating the dignity of every person globally. You can find the song at bit.ly/Gary-Pinto-PC2020.

Gary is also homebound with his family and says music is a powerful tool for changing lives. Families, students and communities are supporting Project Compassion online. There are some great ways for families and communities to fundraise online while at home. Go to lent.caritas.org.au for some great ideas to set up your fundraising page or call 1800 024 413 to donate or set up your page.

The need for support and donations during Caritas Australia's Project Compassion which takes place over Lent is more urgent than ever.

"I know it feels like an incredibly anxious time for everyone, but I remain joyful and hopeful and I think we can all use our talents and abilities to 'Go Further, Together and think more outwardly this Lent,'" Gary says. "Imagine how marginalised communities are feeling - given that many are without housing, experiencing food and water shortages and a lack of health support like we have in Australia."

"Now is the time to put our faith in humanity into action. Together we can sing, together we can raise money and together we can walk alongside each other and in doing so be transformed in our own lives."

Caritas Australia's CEO, Kirsty Robertson has highlighted that if the virus hits places like the Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh, or conflict-torn communities in the Middle East, the impact will be catastrophic.

"Communities like these have lacked sufficient access to proper sanitary living conditions and medical support, even before the spread of COVID-19," Ms Robertson said. "The situation for people in these communities is already highly precarious."

If you are in a position to donate to Caritas Australia, your donation will truly save lives." Caritas Australia, the Catholic church's international aid and development agency and part of one of the largest humanitarian networks in the world. The agency through our international network has already been supporting marginalised communities through its existing humanitarian and long-term development programs, in disaster preparedness and promoting awareness of health and sanitation in this crisis.

To donate to Project Compassion visit Caritas Australia's website, lent.caritas.org.au or call 1800 024 413.

Gary Pinto is available for interviews upon request.

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