



MEDIA STATEMENT

Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB, Archbishop of Perth

Date: Friday 24 January, 2020

Subject: Catholics unite on Australia Day in support of fellow Australians affected by bushfires.

Catholics across Australia will unite on the Australia Day weekend to hold special collections and offer prayers of support for the people and communities affected by the devastating bushfires, and in memory of those who have so tragically lost their lives.

Catholic Archbishop of Perth, Timothy Costelloe SDB, said today:

“The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) on behalf of the Bishops of Australia has established this nation-wide campaign to raise funds to assist the recovery efforts. **Every diocese, and every parish, is being asked to take up a special collection at all Masses over the Australia Day weekend.**

As Archbishop Coleridge, President, ACBC, said when announcing this national campaign: *“Australia is facing an unprecedented calamity as fire engulfs the land in many places. We have all seen the apocalyptic images, even if we are not in the areas most affected. Lives have been lost, homes and towns have been destroyed, and smoke has shrouded large swathes of our country. And there is no end in sight to the horror which confronts us with our powerlessness before the devastating force of nature. The efforts of firefighters have been heroic. The resilience of the communities affected has been extraordinary. This has been Australia at its best, and we all stand with those who have been most stricken and with those who are putting their lives on the line to fight the fires.*

But we need more than words. Expressions of solidarity are important, but they are not enough. The bishops are aware of the huge amount being done around the nation, led by governments and first responders. Many local faith communities, including Catholic parishes and organisations, as well as ecumenical and inter-religious coalitions, are also making a big contribution. While the bishops typically respond to challenges at a parish or diocesan level, the scale of this crisis requires a national response from the whole Church to complement and coordinate what is happening locally”.

I will be celebrating the 11.00am Mass at St Mary’s Cathedral, Perth, on Australia Day as a special Mass for the victims and survivors of the bushfires, for those who have been, and still are, caught up in fighting the fires and in supporting the fire-fighters, and for all who have been affected in any way by this disaster. Throughout the Archdiocese of Perth, parishioners will join together to maintain their prayerful support for all who have been impacted by these fires and be presented the opportunity of contributing to this special appeal, should they choose to do so.

All funds raised from this special appeal will be donated to the Vinnies Bushfire Appeal.

<https://donate.vinnies.org.au/appeals-nsw/vinnies-nsw-bushfire-appeal-nsw>

Let us join together on Australia Day to do all we can to help ‘our mates’... to stand with them and support them in whatever way we can, for as long as it takes” said Archbishop Costelloe.

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