

23 April, 2020

SINGER URGES SUPPORT TO PROTECT THE WORLD'S MOST MARGINALISED DURING COVID-19

Australian singer, songwriter and musician, Gary Pinto will lead a free online concert on Saturday, May 9 for Project Compassion, bringing Australian and international music straight from their lounge room to yours. Gary is urging thousands of school children, teachers, churches and families across Australia during this challenging time, to stand in solidarity with those most vulnerable to COVID-19 globally, during Caritas Australia's Project Compassion.

The lineup will be announced over the coming weeks, but Australian stars, Diesel, Matt Gresham, Carmen Smith, Nashville-based Bobby Lee Stamper and many others are expected to be among those generously putting on the show.

Gary is an ARIA award-winning and multi-platinum selling record artist and a musical mentor to the stars.

Whilst each of us is facing our own challenges, this year Caritas Australia is asking the Australian community to Go Further, Together and continue their amazing support in raising much-needed funds for vulnerable communities in these challenging times.

Last year thanks to all our supporters, including thousands of schools and communities across Australia, Caritas reached 1.52 million people directly. 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.

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 a link to the song at <https://bit.ly/walk-with-me-snippet>

Gary like all of us is currently isolated with his family and says music is a powerful tool for changing lives. At present, families, students and communities are supporting Project Compassion online. There are some great ways to fundraise 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.

"I know it feels like an incredibly anxious time for everyone, but I remain joyful and hopeful. I think we can all use our talents and abilities to 'Go Further, Together and think more outwardly,'" 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.

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

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preparedness and promoting awareness of health and sanitation in this crisis.

To donate to Project Compassion or find out more about the upcoming lounge room session 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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