

1ST SUNDAY OF LENT

WEEKEND OF 25-26 FEBRUARY 2023

LAXMI'S STORY,
NEPAL



16-year-old Laxmi lives in one of the most remote communities in Nepal which experiences high levels of poverty.

Laxmi's chance at a better life was through education, supported by her parents. Sadly, when she was 10 years old, her father passed away and Laxmi stopped going to school.

Before her father's passing, Laxmi joined a child's club at her school that was run with the support of Caritas Nepal, through the Nepal Livelihoods and Resilience Program. Child's clubs support students to develop their speaking, writing and leadership skills through extracurricular activities.

Thanks to the support of her child's club, Laxmi was encouraged to resume her education. She became an active member of her child's club, where she developed the skills and confidence to become a leader, advocating for clean water taps at her school.

"If I don't get to study, then I'll experience hardship. I'll have to struggle like mother. If I don't get to study, then I'll have no knowledge," Laxmi said.

Laxmi is now excelling in her studies and working towards her dream of becoming a civil engineer. She has become a mentor to other girls in her village, encouraging them to stand up for their rights and creating lasting change *For All Future Generations*.



REFLECTION

Nelson Mandela said that education was the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world. There are plenty of people who would agree with him. One of them is Oprah Winfrey who said that education was the way to move mountains, build bridges and to change the world.

Today's readings certainly suggest the value of reading. The story from the Book of Genesis comes from pre-history. It has often been misunderstood to suggest that sin entered the world through one woman. This is not true. On the contrary, the readings tell us that the world is good. When humans try to overstretch their boundaries, trouble follows and the experience of beauty and harmony is threatened. We need to choose our teachers. Are we going to listen to God or the serpent? In our modern world, the serpent takes many forms. There are many threats to the harmony of the human race and the beauty of our natural environment.

Likewise, today's story of the temptations in the wilderness from Matthew's Gospel shows us that some lessons are difficult. Jesus actually teaches the devil. He tells the evil one that God is in charge. Jesus has to decide which voices he will follow. He has to learn that some ideas may

not be as good as they sound. All the kingdoms of the world, Jesus learns, are no substitute for an honest and life-giving relationship with God.

Each week during Lent, Caritas Australia asks us to think about a special story. The story focuses on someone who has benefitted from your generosity through Project Compassion. This week, we hear about 16-year-old Laxmi who lives in a remote part of Nepal. Your help has enabled her to overcome family hardship to pursue her education. She was tempted to give up on school. But Project Compassion enabled her to follow a more positive direction and to realise what she could achieve for her community by becoming an engineer. The evil spirit will always get us to focus on what we don't have. The spirit of light will show us what is truly possible.



DON'T FORGET
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FUNDRAISING PAGE AT:
[WWW.CARITAS.ORG.AU/
PROJECT-COMPASSION](http://WWW.CARITAS.ORG.AU/PROJECT-COMPASSION)

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION



We pray for all involved in the ministry of education. Like Jesus may they be clear, courageous and strong as they pass values of compassion and justice to future generations. May our support for Project Compassion continue to make education more widely available.

FUNDRAISING IDEA

Ask your parish representative or volunteer to distribute the Project Compassion donation boxes and envelopes to parishioners after communion or as they leave Mass today, and encourage them to put their compassion into action *For All Future Generations*.

BULLETIN NOTICE

You can help to improve the lives of children like Laxmi by making a donation through Project Compassion boxes and envelopes, visiting www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion or phoning 1800 024 413.