



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Media Release

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Catholic Church offers prayers and practical assistance in Queensland floods

The Australian Catholic Bishops and people around Australia are united in prayer and practical support as the State of Queensland suffers its worst flooding in decades. The bishops extend heartfelt sympathy to the victims and their families.

Archbishop of Brisbane John Bathersby is currently in Stanthorpe and Auxiliary bishop of Brisbane Brian Finnigan in a statement issued an urgent call for prayers for the deceased.

“We offer prayers for the deceased and their families and the relief workers and all who are suffering as a result of the floods. Many parishes and schools are opening their doors to assist those affected. Our central Archdiocesan office is closed at this stage and we have no power, no lifts, and no lights.”

“The priests, religious and faithful in the affected areas would certainly appreciate prayerful support and whatever assistance can be offered”, he said.

Archdiocesan Priest Fr John Conway is currently the administrator of three parishes in an area at the bottom of the Toowoomba ranges. He and people in the area are responding in the aftermath.

“I’d like to express my gratitude to all the people and priests across Australia who have rung to offer support to me, wishing me well and offering assistance. This is the biggest disaster that has ever happened here, but the response from people in the area has been just phenomenal. I’ve seen people who have been evacuated from their homes working in emergency centres. They are reaching out even in the midst of their own crises. Many places still have no drinking water. Roads are damaged, so trucks can’t get through. We can’t get fuel, milk, bread. We’re basically rationing everything”, he said.

Australians are encouraged to assist in any way they can to relief efforts through St Vincent de Paul and other charities responding to the disaster.

St Vincent de Paul Queensland State President Brian Moore hopes to assist people as quickly as possible.

“St Vincent de Paul in Queensland has put together a flood relief committee. We are appealing for money to get to the conferences to give concrete support to those affected. When the water subsides, Vinnies is going to be there for months meeting the needs of people. It is really heart wrenching to see all the people affected by these floods”, he said.

“Flood victims may have to wait some period of time to recover insurance costs, so we also help by finding temporary accommodation for people displaced by flooding – providing transitional accommodation to move people out of evacuation points, as well as a low-cost housing for people whilst their own homes are being made safe”, he said.

The Holy Father, through the Charitable agency “Cor Unum” has directed \$US 50,000 to the St Vincent de Paul society to assist in the relief effort, and sends his personal prayers to the victims and their families.

To assist in any way, please phone 13 18 12 or www.vinnies.org.au which will allow you to contribute to the St Vincent de Paul Statewide appeal.

For media enquiries, please contact Beth Doherty on 0407 081 256.