

Christian Charity: An invitation from the Bishops of New Zealand

Every year in this holy season, the New Zealand Bishops asks Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand to run a fundraising campaign on their behalf – **the Bishops’ Lent Appeal**.

The theme for the Lent appeal in 2026 is **Hear the Voice, Answer the Call – *Whakarongo ki te reo, Whakahokia te karanga***. During this time, and especially as we near Easter, we invite you to consider how you can hear the voice of those in need and answer the call to Christian charity.

Our world is becoming increasingly wrought by conflict and division. We see great suffering in places like Ukraine, Gaza, Israel, South Sudan and, most recently, in Iran.

We watch this happening as we prepare to meditate on the great suffering that Jesus endured on Good Friday, and with the recent echoes of Scripture – “whatever you did for the least of these, you did for me” – urging us to be mindful of those who are in need.

Supporting the work of Caritas, the second-largest humanitarian organisation in the world, is a chance to tangibly respond to those ruptures across the globe. Each year, the **Bishops’ Lent Appeal** is the best way to fund Caritas’ work – supporting vulnerable communities globally.

As Caritas’ leadership explained at the start of the Lent Appeal, this global instability, along with the pain caused by displacement, humanitarian crises and the impacts of climate change, is increasing the significant strain that many communities were already facing.

As we pointed out in our pastoral letter last November on the World Day of the Poor, Christian charity – which can be lived out through almsgiving, among other practices – is an important part of a life lived in the spirit of the Gospel.

It is an invitation for people to be mindful of the needs of those who are vulnerable and an invitation to be generous, according to their own circumstances.

The money raised in this year’s appeal will support many projects across the world, but one focus is addressing the dire situation facing Rohingya refugee families in Bangladesh. More than 1.3 million Rohingya are stuck in camps with few rights and constant threats of violence, trafficking and exploitation.

Many of us know little, if anything, of this crisis, but Caritas is making a difference to the lives of people in those camps, for whom hope can be elusive.

Every year, individuals and parishes across New Zealand are very generous in supporting this appeal. We hope that this will continue in this Lenten season.

We invite you, during this time of preparation, prayer and almsgiving, to take the time to discern how you can contribute to this campaign. We then encourage you to donate to the **Bishops’ Lent Appeal 2026** at caritas.org.nz/lent or by using the envelopes provided at Mass.

This act of generosity will make a difference – to those Caritas serves near and far, yes, but also within you, as you live out the spirit of Christian charity.

In Christ,

✠ Stephen Lowe, Bishop of Auckland

✠ Michael Dooley, Bishop of Dunedin

✠ Paul Martin SM, Archbishop of Wellington

✠ Michael Gielen, Bishop of Christchurch

✠ John Adams, Bishop of Palmerston North

✠ Richard Laurenson, Bishop of Hamilton