



SHIRLEY, PHILIPPINES

Shirley, thirty-six, is an indigenous Manide woman living in a remote province of the Philippines. She is a mother of four and the sole breadwinner of the family, as her husband is sick. But Shirley was struggling to support the whole family and keep her children in school.

Indigenous minorities in the Philippines face regular discrimination and disadvantage, limiting their access to education, employment and healthcare. But thanks to Caritas Australia’s Supporters, Shirley’s life has transformed. She is now leading her community to take a stand against discrimination, improve health and education, and pave the way for a better future.

Unequal access to health services means that many indigenous children and families cannot access basic medical care. Preventable diseases, such as tuberculosis and measles are common among their community, and there is a high maternal and new-born mortality rate.

With Caritas Australia’s support, Shirley trained to become an indigenous health worker and a leader in her community. She has learnt to supplement her income so she is able to feed her family. The program has also helped Shirley’s children with school fees, uniforms and supplies.

Shirley says there’s still a long way to go to fight for better employment opportunities for the Manide tribe and to reduce discrimination, but together they’ll get there.

Your support is life saving for people experiencing poverty and oppression. Please help more people like Shirley gain confidence and respect within their community and help improve the conditions of indigenous people’s around the world. Let’s Go Further, Together.

REFLECTION/HOMILY NOTES

In today’s readings we reflect on the experience of Jesus in the desert for 40 days which parallels the Israelites’ experience and journey for 40 years in the desert. The wilderness is a place of hardship and struggle, a place to reset the compass of our lives by asking who are we, where did we come from, where are we going?

Jesus remained steadfast in his commitment to his mission and avoided the temptations presented by the devil; rejecting power and material comforts to live more simply.

The temptation for Jesus was to use his powers for his own gain, but he chose not to do this. Rather than turn stones into loaves he remained strong.

We are all tempted to selfishly use the gifts God has given us- but we can

instead choose the path of generosity and service.

Shirley is an Indigenous woman from a remote community high in the hills of the Philippines, who has experienced lifelong discrimination. By participating in the Caritas Australia supported program, Shirley has courageously learnt new healthcare skills to enhance her local community. As Chieftan of her village Shirley has stood up in a leadership capacity to improve the health and status of others.

This Lent, how will we answer God’s call to go further together with Jesus into the desert, to challenge our understanding of our mission and trust in God’s vision for our global community?

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

We pray for our brothers and sisters throughout the world who are pushed to the edges of society and whose value and potential are not recognised; that their silenced voices may be raised in hope.

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 and Go Further, Together.

BULLETIN NOTICE

Indigenous minorities in the Philippines face regular discrimination and disadvantage. Manide woman, Shirley faced challenges supporting her children and sending them to school. With Caritas Australia’s support, Shirley’s life has been transformed.