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Church offers food, ration to migrants

Mumbai: The Catholic Church has begun a series of efforts to help marginalised and vulnerable people in the city during the ongoing lockdown.

The archbishop of Bombay Cardinal Oswald Gracias has set up a crisis management team for this purpose and appealed to churches to not terminate employees.

The Church's Centre for Social Action is reaching out to 5,000 households and over one lakh beneficiaries — tribals, migrant and elderly people, transgenders and rag-pickers across the city — with essential supplies worth Rs 50 lakh.

The Cardinal has been liaising with the PMO and the Director General (DG) of Home Guards about providing help to migrant workers. The DG

had requested the use of facilities to distribute food to them. The archdiocese offered the premises of four schools — St Stanislaus Bandra, St Anne's Malad, Rosary School in Dockyard Road and St John the Baptist School in Thane.

Fr Frazer Mascarenhas, parish priest of St Peter's Church, said, "Fr Felix D'Souza and Tony Coelho, in charge of the facility, have been making arrangements for 100 men and 25 women workers..."

He added, "Our parishioner Dr Richard Pereira conceptualised a programme 'Manna on Wheels' to offer 25 lunch packets in his car initially. Now, our youth use seven cars and 20 volunteers who distribute 1,000 lunch packets."

—**Bella Jaisinghani**