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## Catholic Extension grants 30 full scholarships to Robb Elementary School mass shooting survivors

Scholarship funds donated to children seeking to transfer to local Catholic school

Chicago, IL — <u>Catholic Extension</u>, a Chicago-based nonprofit, whose mission is to work in solidarity with people to build up vibrant and transformative Catholic faith communities among the poorest regions of America, announced today it has awarded 30 full scholarships to children who were wounded in the Robb Elementary School mass shooting. Following the shooting, many families are seeking immediate psychological relief by transferring their children from Robb Elementary School to Sacred Heart Catholic School.

The scholarships awarded are a part of Catholic Extension's ongoing efforts to support the well-being of the children and their families of Uvalde, TX. At this time, approximately 80 families are looking to transfer to Sacred Heart. In response to this, Catholic Extension immediately established the scholarship fund, and is seeking help through outside donations to meet all the demand.

Father Jack Wall, president of Catholic Extension, said, "Catholic Extension is committed to the ongoing care and support for the children and families of Uvalde, TX. It is our belief that awarding scholarships to Sacred Heart Catholic School will provide a safe and loving educational environment to children who are suffering from the physical and emotional wounds of violence."

"The tuition assistance means everything to my son and our family," Oscar Orona, father of Robb Elementary shooting survivor, said. "My son has gone through a lot, and still has a long road to recovery ahead. At the very least, he deserves to go to a school where he feels safe. Thankfully with the support of Catholic Extension, he will now have that reality."

In addition to providing financial assistance to the students, Catholic Extension is supporting six religious sisters who will provide onsite emotional assistance during the first week of school to

both the students and teachers of Sacred Heart Catholic school. The sisters' service aims to provide spiritual comfort and a presence of peace and solidarity as the new school year begins. Throughout the course of the next 18 months, with the support of Catholic Extension, ultimately 100 sisters total will serve the Uvalde and Catholic community in various capacities.

Sister Esther M. Guerrero, MCDP, said, "Returning to school is undoubtedly a scary and trying time right now for the kids of Uvalde, however they are filled with hope. This week, our focus is solely on showing the students, parents and teachers love and support through simply being by their side. We are here to serve this grieving community, no matter how big or small."

Uvalde was one of the first-ever communities Catholic Extension supported, helping build Sacred Heart Church in 1906, and Sacred Heart Catholic School in 1912, both of which remain relevant institutions to date.

For over a century, Catholic Extension has supported this and 1,400 other church communities in rural Texas and along the U.S.- Mexico border. Catholic Extension's most recent activity in Uvalde, TX, involved the Teresian sisters, along with other religious sisters, who launched Camp I-CAN for the survivors of Robb Elementary.

For more information on ways to support the Catholic Church and children in Uvalde, please visit <u>catholicextension.org/uvalde</u>.

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**About Catholic Extension:** Founded in 1905, Catholic Extension works in solidarity with people to build up vibrant and transformative Catholic faith communities among the poor and in America's poorest regions. For more information visit <a href="www.catholicextension.org">www.catholicextension.org</a>; follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/catholicextension or on Twitter at @CathExtension.