
Austria: Star Singers challenging Covid between technology and tradition. Fundraising for India

The Sternsinger (Star Singers) are back on the streets: between Christmas and the Epiphany, they will travel from home to home throughout Austria and Germany, while also respecting COVID restrictions and protocols to guarantee their own safety and that of the families they visit. The Singers, dressed as the Magi, wearing protective masks and keeping social distancing, will flock to the streets to convey their greetings and good wishes, avoiding direct contact with those who will open the doors of their homes. 85,000 singers organized by 3,000 parishes took part in the Christmas 2019/Epiphany 2020 campaign in Austria. A total of €18.4 million was raised, which went to approximately 500 projects in 19 countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America. The money raised during the campaign ending on 6 January 2021 will support the livelihood of farming families in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in southern India, which were severely affected by famine and floods. To reach everyone despite the pandemic this year, the Star Singers will rely on traditional house visits, as well as online donations. Moreover, for the first time, it will be possible to make a donation directly to the smartphones of the small Magi, which will be equipped with a contactless donation service: the virtual cash register of the Star Singers will be able to receive and record the total amount of donations made through a QR code.

In line with tradition, a representative of the Star Singers will be received by Archbishop Christoph Schoenborn of Vienna on 28 December, and by Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen on 30 December.

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