

Gratitude within us

The Lenten Season is upon us and the Mercy Partners Formation Team will be sending out weekly reflections based on Pope Francis' call to radical change for a more merciful world.

In Fratelli Tutti, Pope Francis challenges us to look for ways to build social friendship and a kinder and more inclusive world. Lent gives us a perfect opportunity to change – to focus on our relationship with ourselves, our fellow pilgrims and our God.

Joyce Rupp advises that change always involves

... some sort of mental, physical, emotional or spiritual labour ... noting that, ... today's culture suggests that if we have enough money, the right social connections, sufficient information, the appropriate or best this or that, then exertion and discipline will not be necessary for what we want ... however good things rarely develop all by themselves

(Return to the Root. 2021. 38).

A Lenten practice advocated by Pope Francis is to change the world by being 'bearers of gratitude' and he situates thanksgiving as a hallmark of an authentic Christian life.

To live is above all to have received life. All of us are born because someone wanted us to have life. And this is only the first of a long series of debts that we incur by living. Debts of gratitude. During our lives, more than one person has gazed on us with pure eyes, gratuitously. Often, these people are educators, catechists, persons who carried out their roles above and beyond what was required of them. And they stirred gratitude within us. Even friendship is a gift for which we should always be grateful ... Let us not forget to thank: if we are bearers of gratitude, the

world itself will become better, even if only a little bit, but that is enough to transmit a bit of hope. The world needs hope. And with gratitude, with this attitude of thanksgiving, we transmit a bit of hope. Everything is united and everything is connected, and each one can do their part wherever they are.

(General Audience. Dec 30, 2020)

In the past we gave up something for Lent, however this year we invite you to add something into your life; to see the world more positively, to encourage friendships and community connections and to practise daily gratitude.

Over the next 44 days, let's commit to naming five things for which we feel grateful, and take opportunities to let others know that we appreciate their presence, their kindness or their achievements. By doing so we will be spiritually preparing for the joy and hope of the Easter season.



Reflection: How can you become a bearer of gratitude?

We acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional owners of the lands on which our ministries exist and the Elders both past and present on whose land we walk, work and live. We support the Uluru Statement from the Heart.