

Easter Kindness

There is a kindness that dwells deep down in things; it presides everywhere, often in the places we least expect. The world can be harsh and negative; but if we remain generous and patient, kindness inevitably reveals itself. Something deep in the human soul seems to depend on kindness; something instinctive in us expects it, and once we sense it, we are able to trust and open ourselves ... The word kindness has a gentle sound which seems to echo the presence of compassionate goodness. When someone is kind to you, you feel understood and seen. There is no judgement or harsh perception directed towards you. Kindness has gracious eyes; it is not small-minded or competitive; it wants nothing back for itself (O'Donohue. J., Benedictus. 2007. P. 198).

This passage from O'Donohue's beautiful book of blessings, takes us to the heart of what it means to see the world through a Catholic lens. Catholic Identity, founded in the life and teachings of Jesus, is attentive to all; it is open, welcoming, compassionate and most of all, kind.

There has been much written about nurturing Catholic identity in our ministries and communities and it starts here: with the loving embrace of everyone with whom we work, whatever their background, beliefs or social status.

To be the face of the risen Christ in this Easter season, is to be a person of hope, joy, inclusivity and essential kindness. As Jesus tells us in one of the first definitions of a Christian community ... *by this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another* (John 13:35).

In Fratelli Tutti (2020), Pope Francis urges us to embrace kindness as a core tenet of a Catholic way of seeing the world. He reminds us that St Paul describes kindness as a fruit of the Holy Spirit ... *an attitude that is gentle, pleasant and*

supportive (#223).

In a challenge to all of us Pope Francis calls for, *individuals who possess this quality (kindness) who help make people's lives more bearable, especially by sharing the weight of their problems, needs and fears* (#223)

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could indeed achieve a 'kindness revolution' – to create communities of kindness and welcome for all people. If we could all accept Pope Francis' challenge and make our Easter resolution to practise kindness whenever we can. Catholic identity certainly calls us to be kind and to embrace kindness as our everyday challenge.

Let's take this blessing of O'Donohue to heart in this Easter season and beyond:

May you have the grace and wisdom to act kindly

Learning to distinguish what is personal and what is not.

May you be hospitable to criticism.

May you never put yourself at the centre of things.

May those who work with you know that you see and respect them.

*May you learn to cultivate the art of presence in order to engage with those who meet you
When someone fails or disappoints you, may the graciousness with which you engage
Be their stairway to renewal and refinement
(2007. p. 165).*



Reflection: In what way can you build a "kindness revolution" in your ministry?

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.