

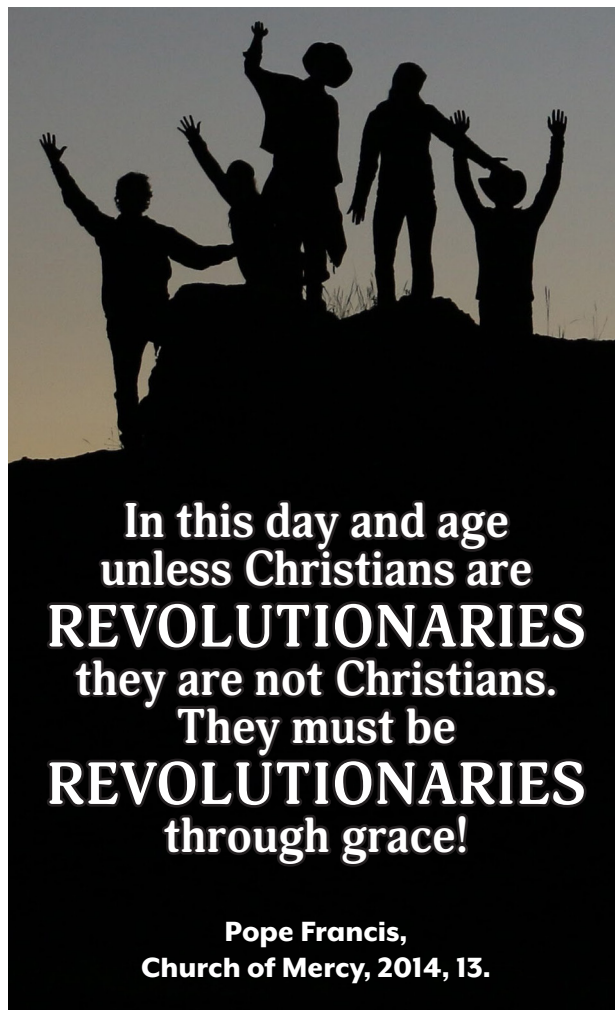
## Catholic Identity is revolutionary

Pope Francis calls on the life and teaching of Jesus in calling for a revolutionary Church, calling us to consider action toward those aspects of our society that are not in keeping with the Gospel call to love of neighbour. One of the most profound teachings of Jesus is the Beatitudes which are strongly counter-cultural: the meek inherit the Earth, the poor in spirit receive the kingdom and the peaceful are God's children. The Catholic approach demands working for peace in a world that is not peaceful; working for the poor in a world that doesn't always care; working in a humble way to redress social deprivation; standing up to advocate against rules and laws which harm people.

Just as Mother Teresa's work with dying beggars in Calcutta or Catherine McAuley's decision to open a house of Mercy in Dublin or Nano Nagle's courage in educating the poor of Cork or St Francis' embrace of the lepers were countercultural, they were also a 'Catholic' response. As St Mary of the Cross MacKillop said – living the Gospel way is to 'never see a need without doing something about it'. These countercultural and often revolutionary ideas are central to Catholic identity. As Pope Francis reminds us: *In this day and age unless Christians are revolutionaries, they are not Christian* (Church of Mercy, 2014, 13).

True Catholic identity therefore invites us to dream of a better world and act for a better world, being committed to chipping away every day at those structures which demean human beings and create inequality and poverty. For ministries in education, health, aged care and social services this commitment to making the world a fairer, kinder and more equal place is part of the ministry's core work.

Jesus uses the parable of the Good Samaritan to invite all of us into a revolutionary way of thinking. He attached the word 'good' to a Samaritan, someone despised within Jewish society. This story, like most of those he used in his ministry, was designed to shock. There is something of all of the characters in this parable in our ministries – those of us who turn away from the call for compassion, those who walk away when challenges arise and those who, like the inn keeper, assist us in our desire to care for the least. Jesus reminds listeners that our common humanity should be the heart of our actions. That exclusion and judgement regarding who should receive our help has no place in a Catholic ministry.



Reflections: How could your ministry be described as inclusive, holistic and open to everyone?

*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.*