

## WITNESSES OF HOPE

We are called to encounter Jesus face-to-face through the people we meet each day. We are invited to look into the eyes of another and see God within them. We are encouraged through our acts of healing and service, no matter how small or ordinary they may seem, to be a presence of Christ. This is what it means to be a witness of hope!

And these experiences transform us from feeling sorry for ourselves in to becoming,

*springs of hope when ... we dry the tears shed by others; when... we take care of what others are lacking; when ... we bend towards those who suffer; when, ... we quench the thirst of those in need of us. For it is only if we stop thinking of ourselves that we will find ourselves again*

(Pope Francis, General Audience, Wednesday, 5 April 2023).

The Christ we meet in poverty and human need may not have a physical appearance that is always comfortable for us to approach and connect with, but this is the true meaning of communion. The truth is, we are all made of the same substance: clay, the dust of the earth, a fragile material from which we come and to which we will all return. We are all capable of the same things. Our only hope is that when we find ourselves in a state of despair, exposed, rejected, and cast out by society, someone, somewhere will reach out a hand and lift us up.

To be lifted up is a sacred form of communication. We have always believed that actions speak

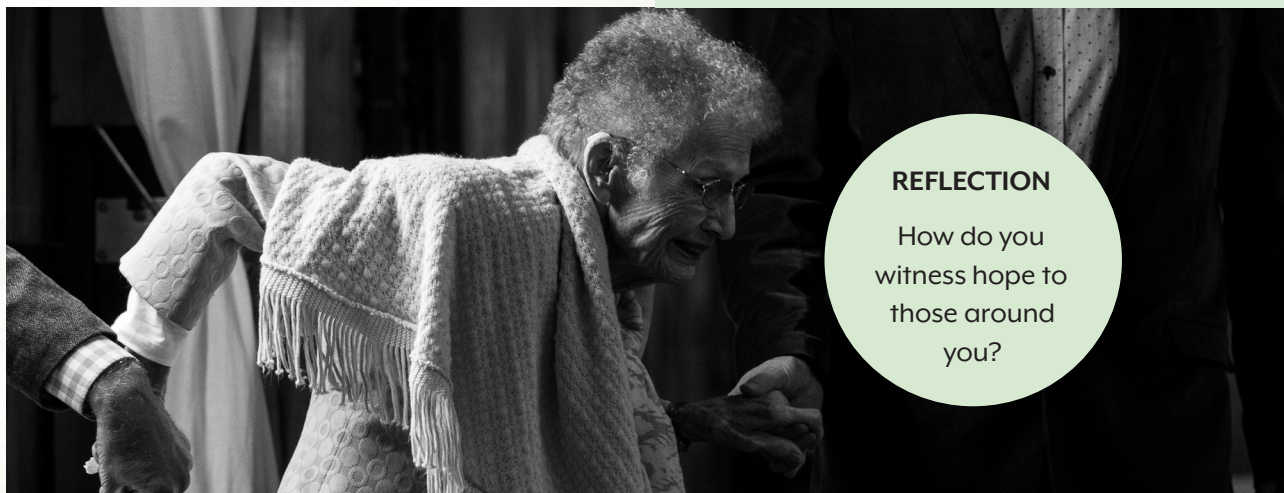
louder than words, and in times of great emotion we hug, hold on, lean on, and stand side by side. Through our actions, we are transformed.

Pope Francis at the Holy Mass and Conferral of the Sacrament of Confirmation (28 April 2013) reminds us that:

*The Holy Spirit is truly transforming us, and through us he also wants to transform the world in which we live. Let us open the doors to the Spirit, let ourselves be guided by him, and allow God's constant help to make us new men and women, inspired by the love of God which the Holy Spirit bestows on us! How beautiful it would be if each of you, every evening, could say: Today at school, at home, at work, guided by God, I showed a sign of love towards one of my friends, my parents, an older person! How beautiful!*

*Loving God,  
We grieve the loss of life through acts of violence.  
Please comfort all those who grieve,  
or have been impacted by these events.  
We thank you for the ordinary people, police,  
ambulance and emergency medicine personnel  
who were first responders to these events.  
We pray for the recovery of those who have been  
injured, and those who continue to be  
distressed by these traumatic circumstances.  
Please turn our hearts to Jesus that we may  
find our rest in him and hasten the day  
when peace and justice reign.  
We pray in the name of Jesus the Prince of Peace.  
Amen*

*An excerpt from "A prayer for victims of violence" by Anglican Archbishop Kanishka Raffel - <https://sydneyanglicans.net/news/a-prayer-for-victims-of-violence>*



### REFLECTION

How do you  
witness hope to  
those around  
you?

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.