

## 6. Building Communities of Mercy



- > The foundation of a community of mercy is unity.
- > How do the image and the metaphors of the single body and the symphony suggest the nature of this unity?

### GATHERING SPACE

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Corinthians 12)

The Church is catholic because she is the home of harmony where unity and diversity know how to merge to become a great source of wealth. Let us think about the image of a symphony, which implies accord, harmony, various instruments playing together. (Pope Francis)

### FROM THE CHURCH OF MERCY BY POPE FRANCIS

In Chapter 9 of *The Church of Mercy*, Pope Francis outlines the key elements of a Christian understanding of the common good. A Church of Mercy promotes, makes present and advocates for the common good in the world. As a consequence, building a community of mercy must start with these principles.

**Magnanimity:** having a great heart, greatness of mind, great ideals and the wish to do great things; doing the little everyday things with a heart open to God and to others.

**Freedom:** being able to think about what we do, being able to assess what is good and opting for good even if it means going against the tide.

**Service:** working for a more just world. Not remaining insensitive to the inequalities that persist in the world.

**Human Dignity:** if all people, created by God, are equal and have God-given dignity, then this dignity demands an active participation in life and a contribution to the common good.

**Solidarity:** seeing others not as rivals or statistics, but brothers and sisters. The measure of the greatness of a society is found in the way it treats those most in need.

**Commitment to Peace:** peace is the responsibility of everyone. Peace requires a persistent, patient, strong, intelligent dialogue by which nothing is lost.

**The fundamentals of life:** family, life, education, health and security. There is neither real promotion of the common good nor real human development when there is ignorance of these fundamental pillars.

### FOR REFLECTION AND SHARING

- > How do the principles outlined by Pope Francis for the common good challenge your work as a board member?
- > What aspects of Pope Francis' principles for the common good speak strongly to you?

## PRAYER

May we be challenged, Compassionate God, to work at all times for the common good – in our personal, professional and communal life. Help us to inspire others to join the orchestra of unity and love which sustains communities of mercy.

### **For reconciliation and justice for Indigenous Australians**

*Compassionate God, help us build unity*

### **For a spirit of welcome to those who seek refuge in our country from war and violence**

*Compassionate God, help us build unity*

### **For persistent, patient, strong, intelligent dialogue about peace and freedom in our nation**

*Compassionate God, help us build unity*

### **For greatness of heart, greatness of mind, great ideals and the wish to do great things**

*Compassionate God, help us build unity*

### **For solidarity with all people, especially those who struggle**

*Compassionate God, help us build unity*

### **For courage, in this Year of Mercy, to open the doors of our hearts to working tirelessly for the common good**

*Compassionate God, help us build unity*

*(Pause for any special intentions)*

## FOR THE END OF THE MEETING

Compassionate God  
Bless us with  
Minds open to the possibilities of a more just  
society  
Hearts nourished by our contemplation of  
your call to mercy  
and hands ready to act for unity and the  
common good.  
May we embrace all with your tenderness and  
compassion and work tirelessly to build  
communities of mercy.

Freedom means being able to think about  
what we do, being able to assess what is  
good and what is bad, these are the type of  
conduct that lead to development, it means  
always opting for the good. Let us be free for  
goodness. And in this do not be afraid to go  
against the tide, even if it is not easy.  
(Pope Francis)

Illustration from Sieger Köder 'Art and Inspiration'. Bible: Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition. Simmonds, G: *The Closeness of God* (2013). Pope Francis: *The Church of Mercy* (2014), pp133-144.

COMPASSION JUSTICE RESPECT HOPE



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