



# EASTER: LIVING WITH RADICAL OPTIMISM & ACTIVE HOPE



I believe that **'Radical Optimism'** and **'Active Hope'** ...  
gives us the faith and courage to face the difficult realities that are being unveiled in our times.  
[from Richard Rohr's Daily Meditation – Telling a new story, 15 January 2021]

At Mercy Works, in very tangible ways I have come to know that such **'radical optimism'** does lead to **'active hope'**, a reflection of Mercy In Action, a reflection of Easter.

Such **'radical optimism'** goes much deeper than merely having a positive attitude to life. At Mercy Works, we approach each local community that we work alongside from a strength-based approach. For example, as we begin to build relationships of trust and respect, we ask the local people – How can we work together? What is positive about this community that you would like to build on with support from Mercy Works?

As I reflect back on my own life journey, I realise I was once a 'glass half empty' person. More recently I know I have become a 'glass half full' person. I attribute this to the Grace of God, a very deep Presence working in my own life, who touches and heals the core of who I am. Such Presence is the root of our reality. Such Presence is at the heart of the good news of the Gospel. Such Presence is at the centre of the Easter story.

Let me share with you three of our current Mercy Works stories which are underpinned by **'radical optimism'** and are evidence of **'active hope'**. With each story, I will offer some **inspirational words** from the Letters of Catherine McAuley (Founder of the Sisters of Mercy). Words I believe she would say to us today.

In Port Augusta, South Australia, last year Mercy Works began a new pilot project called "Prospering After Prison". We have partnered with Centacare and the Catholic Diocese of Port Pirie. This project provides casework to support aboriginal women through developing relationships of trust as they transition from prison life and reconnect with family and country. We hear stories of pain, grief and loss from the women. Yet we also gradually see signs of the healing of trauma and growing resilience in the women's lives.

In response, I believe Catherine McAuley would say **"The tender Mercy of God has given us one another"**.



# ACTIVE HOPE



# RADICAL OPTIMISM

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As we wind down our work among the people of Coroka and Mt. Hagen in Papua New Guinea after 15 years, we are very grateful for all that has been achieved in these communities. We are also very excited about our new work in the province of Simbu. We are currently laying the foundations at all levels of the community for our new work in Simbu in life and skills training for income generation.

Our work in Papua New Guinea always brings life to Catherine McAuley's words **"The poor need help today not next week"**.

As we begin our new work in the district of Baucau in Timor Leste we are delighted to form a partnership with the Australian Marist Solidarity. Our two projects there are with Uai Lili, a computer and English language centre, and with a local NGO Katilosa who offers outreach to children and adults living with a disability.

I believe Catherine McAuley would value deeply the courage and competence of the local Timorese people who facilitate these projects saying, "We must strive to do ordinary things extraordinarily well".

During this Easter season, let's all consciously live our lives with such **radical optimism**! In doing this our world becomes alive with **active hope** which is sorely needed in the "difficult realities that are being unveiled in our times."

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