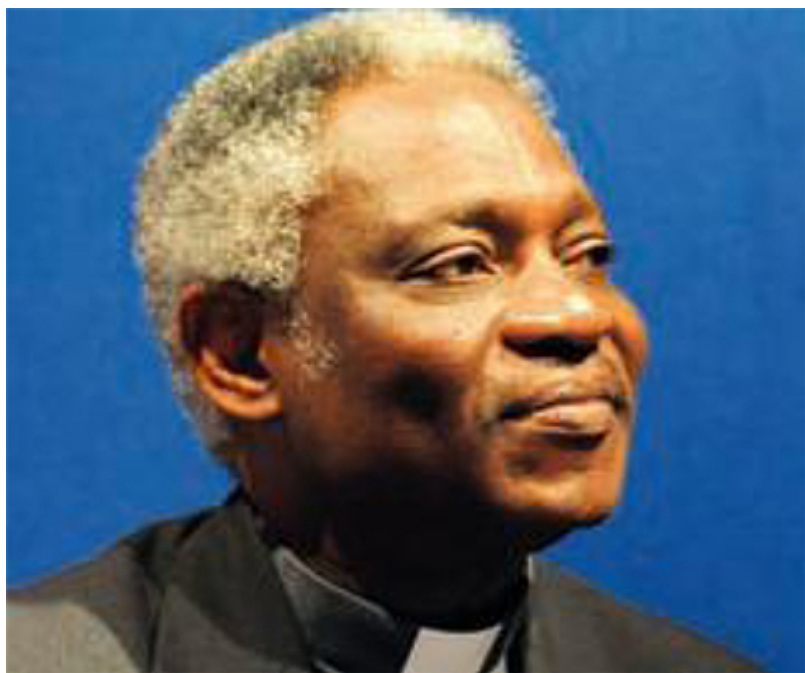


How do social action and evangelisation fit together?



The Caritas network of charities is at a turning-point. At the general assembly of the Catholic network in Rome this week a new secretary-general, Michel Roy, was elected, after the Vatican said they wanted a new leader who would give the confederation of charities a more distinct Catholic identity. The Vatican blocked Roy's predecessor, Lesley-Anne Knight, from standing for re-election, which Caritas' president, Cardinal Oscar *Cardinal Peter Turkson, President PJI* Rodríguez Maradiaga, said "had caused grievance in our confederation, above all among the many women working for Caritas across the world".

At the start of the week Cardinal Peter Turkson, head of the Vatican's Council for Justice and Peace, gave a reflection on the Good Samaritan during which he told representatives that the work of Caritas "is part and parcel of evangelisation". You can read his speech [here](#) and an excerpt here:

- In testimony to Christ's charity, through works of relief and development, Caritas is part and parcel of evangelisation. For, as Pope Paul VI affirmed, "evangelisation would not be complete if it did not take account of the unceasing interplay of the Gospel and of man's concrete life, both personal and social." This aspect of evangelisation is also articulated in the Church's social doctrine, which proclaims and bears witness to faith. It is an instrument and an indispensable setting for formation in faith.
- Now the Church is a mystery and so cannot be reduced to a visible reality alone. She is the subject of Catholic Social Doctrine, not just its object.
- We may note several challenges in this regard: excessive professionalism, proselytism in two senses: one, an abuse of the gratuitous charity we are called to offer; the other, an excessive caution about proselytism which would block legitimate and necessary evangelisation.
- First, we should not draw a fictitious distinction between "professionalism" and evangelisation. The power of the Gospel calls us to be professional in every action, but it also expects us to be motivated by faith and values when we offer this service in the name of Jesus and of His Church. Here our Good Samaritan is again the perfect example, as out of his own resources he provided

the best possible care (oil, wine, bandages, transportation, pre-paid care at a hostel).

- Christians, "as citizens of two cities, [are exhorted] to strive to discharge their earthly duties conscientiously and in response to the Gospel spirit. Therefore, let there be no false opposition between professional and social activities on the one part, and religious life on the other.

Cardinal Peter Turkson