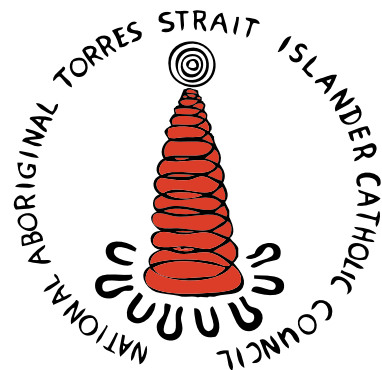


**Always Was,
Always Will Be.**

8-15 NOV 2020



Together in the Spirit



NATSICC Logo

The NATSICC Logo depicts a willy willy, the wind force in the centre a symbol of God's Spirit. The round concentric circles at the top symbolise God and Life, the base depicts men and women receiving the Holy Spirit. The logo was designed by Mrs. Olive Boddington, from Western Australia.

NATSICC Vision Statement

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council promotes and celebrates the cultural identity of our Peoples across the nation by living and expressing, in all its endeavours, the spirituality of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Peoples.

Through this expression and recognition of our cultural identity we will find our rightful place within the Catholic Church in Australia.

Acknowledgements

NATSICC offers thanks to the following people that have assisted in the preparation of this document: NATSICC Liturgy team and Dr. Paul Taylor, Sr Carmel Pilcher, Bishop Charles Gauci

Cover artwork acknowledgement:

Artwork created by delegates at the 2009 NATSICC Assembly - Brisbane and depicts Faith and Culture coming together.

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Contents

5	NATSICC Liturgy Team Welcome
6	About the Resources
8	Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country
9	Acknowledgements in a virtual World
11	Suggestions for Acknowledgements
10-11	Jubilee Prayer
12-13	Poster
14	Liturgical Suggestions Readings, Hymns, Prayers of Intercession
15-16	Liturgical Suggestions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Congregations
17-18	Liturgical Suggestions Non Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Congregations
19	Homily notes - Bishop Charles Gauci
22	Youth Activity - Tree of Life

NATSICC wishes to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians who have walked upon and cared for this land for thousands of years.

We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to this Country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are respectfully advised that this publication may contain the words, names, images or descriptions of people who have passed away.



NATSICC Liturgy Team Welcome

Together in the Spirit was the theme for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday - celebrated in July this year - and we feel that its still an important concept to focus upon during the rescheduled NAIDOC week.

It is equally important to note the official NAIDOC theme - *Always was, Always will be.* - which contains a strong resonance to Pope Francis' 2015 Encyclical "Laudato Si, on Care for our Common Home."

The Encyclical highlights and makes clear the need for Australians to accept and acknowledge the stewardship and knowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people possesses and that which is deeply imbedded in the Culture and Spirituality of Australia's First Peoples.

In the toughest of years, Australians have come together to keep each other safe, to ask R U OK? and to show common care for our neighbours. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities have embraced technology to see and support Elders, to share a laugh and to see Christ in the Face of our Family and friends.

Please take the opportunity that NAIDOC week presents to support your local Traditional Custodians and to celebrate the gifts of perseverance, spirituality and faith of the World's oldest continuing Culture.

NATSICC LITURGY TEAM



About these Resources

These resources are an amended version of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday Resources used in July this year. Many Parishes and Schools did not have the opportunity to celebrate the day so we hope that we can inspire and assist Parishes and Schools to celebrate during NAIDOC week.

The suggestions included in this booklet can be used during online Masses and by schools wishing to celebrate in their own ways.

Use

The Liturgical resources have been designed to reflect the diversity of Parishes and schools across Australia and allow for appropriate adaptation.

Parishes and schools with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members are able to incorporate the Traditional rituals suggested in the resources in consultation with the local people.

NATSICC encourages discussion with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of the congregation to further develop ways in which Traditional rituals and symbols can be used to enrich the Mass.

We have developed a number of digital resources at www.natsicc.org.au that can be used at either online Mass or Traditional Mass settings.

Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country and ceremonies

An Acknowledgement of Country is a ceremony that pays respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Custodians of the area on which the Parish stands and surrounds, or where a speech, event or presentation is taking place.

An **'Acknowledgement of Country'** is a way that all people can show awareness and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage and the ongoing relationship the Traditional Custodians have with their land. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people can perform 'Acknowledgement of Country'. It is a demonstration of respect dedicated to the Traditional Custodians of the land (or sea) where the event, meeting, school function or conference takes place. It can be formal or informal.

A 'Welcome to Country' is a small Ceremony where Traditional Custodians, usually Elders, welcome people to their land.

This is a significant recognition and is made through a formal process, although it's up to the Elder how they decide to carry out the Ceremony.

It also depends on the location of the event and the practice of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community which can vary greatly according to region.

During a 'Welcome to Country' the Elders welcome those in attendance, guests, staff and students to their Country. It

might be just a simple speech or a performance of some sort, like a song, traditional dance, a didgeridoo piece or any combination of these.

'Welcome to Country' should always occur in the opening of the event in question, preferable as the first item. Note that a 'Welcome to Country' is often considered a right and not a privilege.

Protocols for welcoming visitors to Country have been a part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture for thousands of years (www.creativespirits.info).

The use of an Acknowledgement or Welcome to Country has become more common place since the creation of Reconciliation Action Plans (RAP's), which places an Acknowledgement or Welcome to Country as an important step in the process of practical Reconciliation in this Country. The Council is aware that some Parishes already do it, some do it on special occasions and some do not do it at all.

A recent survey of Parishes in Australia indicated a strong desire to pay respect and acknowledge those that walked upon and cared for the land for

thousands of years and still continue to do so. NATSICC would like to recommend that Parishes consider the following forms of Acknowledgement:

- Acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which the Parish stands in a physical form (signage, plaque) on Parish grounds
- Provide an Acknowledgement to the Traditional Custodians in Mass booklets, websites and other media produced by the Parish
- An Acknowledgement or Welcome to Country regularly on the Liturgical Calendar or on significant days.

NATSICC is happy to assist you to implement any of the above recommendations. Additionally, your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Ministries work very hard in the Community and provide a great resource to Parishes.



The simple answer is yes! An Acknowledgement of Country is an opportunity for all participants in the meeting to pay their respects to Traditional Custodians, and we think it brings us all closer together as Australians.

Just as technology has allowed us to be together virtually, an Acknowledgement brings us together as a society and as a Country.

Option 1 - General Acknowledgement

Although we are meeting virtually, we continue to Acknowledge the Traditional Custodians that have, for thousands of years, walked upon and cared for the lands upon which we are all individually located.

We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to this Country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of reconciliation.

Option 2 – Specific locations and Language Groups

(Individually acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the lands upon which each meeting participant is located):

Although we are meeting virtually, we continue to Acknowledge the Traditional Custodians that have, for thousands of years, walked upon and cared for the lands upon which we are all individually located.

We respectfully acknowledge: The _____ peoples in (location 1), the _____ peoples in (location 2), the _____ peoples in (location 2) and so on

We acknowledge each of these Nations and the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to this Country and we commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of reconciliation.

Jubilee Prayer and Statement of Commitment

Father our Creator
You created all things, seen and unseen,
Listen to my silent prayer as I stand here before you.
As my weary eyes look back over distant horizons,
Back to those days where my people walked.

The footprints of my grandfathers are imprinted on the earth
and their images become real to me.
I see my Grandfathers standing tall and strong, warriors of long ago.
I hear them singing, I see them dancing, and my spirit moves within me.

They told me of the emus fighting; picking the scent of our hunters.
The images fade away as I feel the hurt of my people.

I can hear the cries of my Grandmothers as they cry for their children.
Grandfather, You can see me as I stand here and feel this hurt.

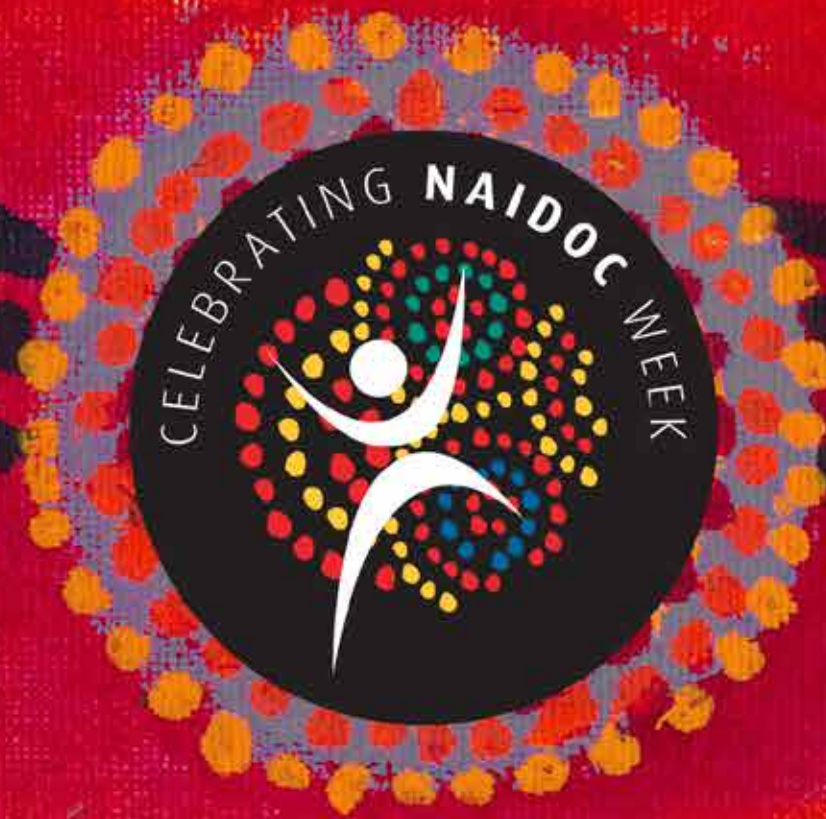
Father Creator, is this the purpose of my being here?
Or is it your plan to reshape my people to be once again the proud race it once was?
Let me walk with you and my Grandfathers towards the dawning
of a proud and new nation.
I thank you for my Sacred Being.
Amen.

NATSICC Leadership Gathering November 1995



**Always Was,
Always Will Be.**

3-15 NOV 2020



Together in the Spirit

Celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics during NAIDOC Week

Liturgical Suggestions

NATSICC offers two sets of Liturgical resources:

1. Suggestions is for assemblies where the majority of worshippers are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

The ceremonies in this section are ways that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities enhance and enrich the Liturgy, bringing the gift of culture and tradition to the Catholic Church in Australia.

2. Liturgical resources are best suited to Parish and school worshipping Communities where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are not in attendance or participating in the Mass celebrations.

These resources focus on celebrating and acknowledging the contributions of Australia's First Peoples in ways that are meaningful and appropriate.

NATSICC advises that you work closely with your Parish Priest and Liturgical team to ensure the suggestions conform with the Liturgical norms of the Roman Missal.

Suggested Hymns

Entrance
Christ Be Our Light (CWBII 540)
Gather Your People O Lord (CWBII 490)

Preparation of Gifts
I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light (CWBII 514)
For the Fruits of All Creation (CWBII 488)

Communion
Taste and See (Herry) (CWBII 610)
One Bread, One Body (CWBII 579)

Recessional
City of God (CWBII 453)
Bring Forth the Kingdom (CWBII 647)

Readings

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time (Yr A)

First Reading
Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31

Responsorial Psalm
Psalms 128:1-2, 3, 4-5

Second Reading
Thessalonians 5:1-6

Gospel Acclamation
Live in me and let me live in you, says the Lord;
My branches bear much fruit.

Gospel
Matthew 25:14-30

Prayers of Intercession

Introduction

Sisters and Brothers, let us pray for the needs of our world, especially the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples during this challenging time.

We pray for Pope Francis, our Bishops and all the clergy, religious and laity May they be faithful to Christ's teaching of truth, justice and peace.
Lord, hear us.
Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. That all will recognize the Creator Spirit in their culture and the cultures of all newcomers which will allow all Australians to live fully, grow strong and be proud of their heritage.
Lord, hear us.
Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for all families, Communities and Nations that are struggling with the Coronavirus and restrictions. That the Holy Spirit will bring comfort and that they may feel the blessing of God's love for them.
Lord, hear us.
Lord, hear our prayer.
We pray for all young people,

particularly in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities. That the Holy Spirit, and the Blessed Virgin Mary will walk with them and touch their lives as they make their contribution to God, the Church and society.
Lord, hear us.
Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and all people in the world. That their young and old will be a source of hope and rebirth as they walk in solidarity with each other and the Church.
Lord, hear us.
Lord, hear our prayer

We pray for our First Nations Christians. That they be empowered to take up leadership roles to enable them to share their gifts of faith, spirituality and culture within the Catholic Church in Australia.
Lord, hear us.
Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for all who seek to promote peace in the world. That the gifts of the Holy Spirit will foster a spirit of forgiveness and harmony in our communities.
Lord, hear us.
Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for all who have passed from this life. That they will rest peacefully in God's loving care.
Lord, hear us.
Lord, hear our prayer.

Conclusion
Lord of heaven and earth, gathered in faith and in response to your Word we ask you to accept the prayers we make, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **R. Amen.**

LITURGICAL RESOURCES FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER WORSHIPPING ASSEMBLIES

We acknowledge that God has been walking with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, making His Presence known through a living culture that has been maintained till this present time. In many and varied ways God spoke to many ancient cultures through prophets and traditions, but now he speaks to us through Jesus Christ whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom He also created the world (Heb 1:1-2) Elements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture can be included in the Church's Liturgy – particularly when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are members of the celebrating assembly. Please follow the suggestions given, and NATSICC strongly advises that you work closely with your Parish Priest and Liturgical team to ensure the suggestions conform with the Liturgical norms of the Roman Missal.

LANGUAGE
Language is a cultural element that is closely linked with identity and pride in oneself and one's culture. This year is an excellent opportunity to bring the gift of culture into the Mass by including local Language speakers to participate in elements of the Mass.

Careful consideration needs to be given to determine which elements in the language of the people can be properly introduced into Liturgical celebrations. The suggestions below would be most appropriate to worshipping communities where Traditional Languages are predominantly used.

In other congregations, perhaps a word or phrase in local Language could be included with the permission of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander speakers.

How Language can be used:

*The readings can be read in Language from a recognised scripture translation.
*1 or more of the Prayers of the Faithful can be in Language – as above.
*Stanzas of a hymn can be translated into Language – as above.

INTRODUCTION
Use the Welcome to Country guide available at <http://www.natsicc.org.au/acknowledgement-and-welcome-to-country.html> to determine whether a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement of Country is appropriate.

SMOKING CEREMONY
An Elder could Smoke the Community and the precious objects – altar, place of the Word, Cross – at the start of the Mass.

A RITE OF WATER BLESSING
Alternatively, a suggested text for this Blessing is as follows:

Lord God, our Father, at your invitation to 'come to the water', we ask you to bless this water.

At the beginning of time you blessed the waters of creation, your great gift to us.

Water to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is always a sign of your peace and fulfilment in everything that is good: the promise of food, of love and protection, and your power to love one another as true Christians.

Water is also a sign of the new life in Christ, which we have received in baptism.

We ask that through your blessing of this water we will be renewed in your spirit.

We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Water containers can be a large shell or coolamon and a branch from an appropriate native tree.

The priest may add to this Water Blessing - containers can be a large shell or coolamon and a branch from an appropriate native tree can be used to sprinkle the water.

GOSPEL PROCESSION
In the spirit of our ancestors the Message Stick can be carried forward with the Gospel Book. Other symbols and actions are used according to local practice. Traditional dance and instruments may also accompany a procession of the Word.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION
These could be prepared by the Community prior to Mass or prayed spontaneously during Mass. Alternatively, you can use the suggestions on the previous page.

PRESENTATION OF GIFTS
The bread to be used for Consecration might be carried to the altar in a coolamon.

Other gifts such as a boomerang, woomera, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander painting, clap sticks might be presented. Gifts of food etc. to share with others might also be presented. All gifts given at Mass are intended to be given to the poor; they would not be returned to the giver but shared with others.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER
Eucharistic Prayers for Masses with Children (where appropriate to age group of assembly), Masses for Reconciliation, or one of the Eucharistic Prayers for Special needs and Occasions may be used.

The Aboriginal Our Father (on the following page) may be also be used.

ABORIGINAL OUR FATHER

The Bishop of Broome has granted permission for use of this prayer as long as it used, as is, unchanged. (It is a good thing to have one National Prayer that all Aboriginal people and their friends can share)

You are our Father, You live in heaven,

We talk to You. Father You are good.

You are our Father, You live in heaven,

We talk to You. Father You are good.

We believe your Word, Father,

We are Your children, give us bread today.

We believe Your Word, Father,

We are Your children, give us bread today.

We have done wrong, we are sorry,

Teach us, Father, all about Your Word.

We have done wrong, we are sorry,

Teach us, Father, all about Your Word.

Others have done wrong to us,

And we are sorry for them, Father, today.

Others have done wrong to us,

And we are sorry for them, Father, today.

Stop us from doing wrong, Father,

Save us all from the evil one.

Stop us from doing wrong, Father,

Save us all from the Evil One.

(Repeat first verse)

MUSIC / SONG / DANCE

Music and singing, which express the soul of the people, have pride of place in the Liturgy. Music forms melodies and musical instruments could be used in divine worship if they are suitable or can be made suitable, for sacred use, and provided they are in accord with the dignity of the place of worship and truly contribute to the uplifting of the faithful.

* Didgeridoo and clapsticks can accompany the choir.

* Didgeridoo and clapsticks together with other instruments can be used for reflective music.

*A Hymn can be sung in language. If a stanza of a hymn is translated it should be able to be used at an appropriate time in the Liturgy. *Dance can be incorporated into the liturgy, especially as a procession – entrance, book, or gifts.

ACTIONS

The gestures and postures of the assembly are signs of its unity and express its active participation and foster the spiritual attitude of the participants.

*** ADDITIONAL PRAYER SUGGESTIONS****PRAYER OF HEALING**

God of Mercy and Compassion, Our hearts too, are heavy with the pain of our people.

We are sorry.

Hopelessness and despair of life has caused much hurt and anger. They have lost their way.

We ask You to touch the hearts of our broken people.

Mend their paths and walk with them.

May they feel the Spirit of our Ancestors.

May the Spirit of our Ancestors strengthen and guide us,

On our journey back to the light of hope,

And the love of life in Christ
Amen.

Written by AICCQ Working Group
27 October 2000

PRAYER OF THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

Father of all, You gave us the Dreaming,

You have spoken to us through our beliefs,

You then made Your love clear to us in the person of Jesus

We thank You for Your care.

You own us, You are our hope. Make us strong as we face the problems of change.

We ask You to help the people of Australia to listen to us and respect our culture.

Make the knowledge of You grow strong in all people,

So that You can be at home in us and we can make a home for everyone in our land.

Amen

Prepared by Aboriginal people for Pope John Paul II's visit to Alice Springs 1986

* Since both of these prayers contain elements of intercession, you could use them as part of the general intercessions - at the end of the intentions before the concluding prayer by the Priest. Or, additionally, on the parish or school newsletter for people to pray during the week.

**NON ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PARISH AND SCHOOL CONGREGATIONS**

There are over 130,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics in Australia. However, your Parish may not have our people present. The following suggestions may be useful in preparing to celebrate NAIDOC Week in 2020 and to keep Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in your thoughts and prayers on this day.

THE BELOW SUGGESTIONS CAN BE INCORPORATED INTO AN ONLINE MASS / LIVE STREAM SCENARIO. AN ONLINE RESOURCE KIT WILL BE AVAILABLE TO ASSIST YOU AT WWW.NATSICC.ORG.AU.

A VISIBLE REPRESENTATION OF AUSTRALIA'S FIRST PEOPLE WITHIN YOUR BROADCAST SYMBOLISES RESPECT, ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND CONSIDERATION ON THIS SPECIAL DAY.

CONDUCT AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Use the Acknowledgement of COUNTRY and Welcome to Country guide available at <http://www.natsicc.org.au/acknowledgement-and-welcome-to-country.html>

In more certain times, an invitation to a local Elder to conduct a Welcome to Country would be appropriate - however due to COVID restrictions this may not be possible.

An example of an Acknowledgement of Country can be found on page 9 of this publication.

CONNECTING WITH YOUR LOCAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITY

To enhance your Liturgy, and to avail your parishioners of the gifts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, NATSICC suggests that you involve your local Aboriginal or Islander Catholic Ministry (AICM) in planning your celebration.

Visit www.natsicc.org.au and go to 'About NATSICC' and click on your State or Territory to find your local AICM.

These ministries work very hard to serve local Indigenous Catholics and do a lot of good in the Community. You may be able to work together in preparing the Liturgy, sourcing speakers or presenters or learning more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics in your area and ultimately build a relationship that will benefit the Parish.

CELEBRANT INTRODUCTION

Today is the 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time and a day which signals the end of a rescheduled NAIDOC Week. We celebrated the week later this year due to the Pandemic, but take this opportunity to acknowledge that our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics number over 130,000 and are growing strongly.

Today we acknowledge that God has been walking with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, making His Presence known through a continuous living culture over many thousands of years.

We pray in thanksgiving for these ancient peoples who have enriched and sustained our continent over all that time. We praise God for the people who nurtured the land here in our Parish that we call home.

Continued overleaf.....

RITE FOR BLESSING AND SPRINKLING OF WATER

May be used in place of the Penitential Act on this day (appendix 2 Roman Missal)

PRIEST: Dear sisters and brothers, let us ask our ever-living God to bless this gift of creation, this living water, that has nourished people of this land since the Dreaming and will now be sprinkled on us as a memorial of our Baptism.

May God bless us with the grace to remain faithful to the Spirit we have received.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

MUSIC

Prior to Mass, or during the gifts procession, a recording of instrumental Aboriginal music (didgeridoo, clapsticks) might be played.

GIFTS PROCESSION

Besides bread and water for the Eucharist, gifts of food or a special collection could be brought forward for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in need.

Additionally, a coolamon could be placed in front of the altar as a symbol of the absence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters at the table.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

Eucharistic Prayer for Reconciliation II

AUDIO VISUAL

- Display a Powerpoint prepared by NATSICC before Mass
- Ask local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students to create artworks to celebrate the day and project in the Parish.

Prayer for Reconciliation

God of all creation,
as we journey together in this Great Southern Land,
we pray for healing, forgiveness and unity,
creating a path of good will, with justice and compassion.
Jesus, through the power of your love,
you have given us the courage, wisdom and strength
to share our gifts and talents in humility.
In peace and understanding we reconcile with each other.
Creator Spirit, we come together in prayer and thanksgiving for the many blessings we have received.
Allow your Spirit to wash over us and give us strength to walk together as one.

Reconciliation Church prayer was written by a small group of Aboriginal Elders and Reconciliation Church staff members in 2014.

INCORPORATING LANGUAGE FOR NON ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CONGREGATIONS

Australia's First Peoples consist of over 250 different Language Groups. Each Group is distinct from one another in rituals, sacred knowledge and belief systems. This year is the perfect opportunity to incorporate the Traditional Custodians of your local area into the Liturgy. An excellent map displaying language groups is <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/aiatsis-map-indigenous-australia>.

Consider incorporating the following into your Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander celebrations:

- Place a prominent Acknowledgement to the Traditional Custodians in your Mass booklet, Mass powerpoint and/or Parish Website
- Invite local Traditional Custodians to:

2. Translate a reading or Prayer of Intercession into local Language. You could repeat the intention into English or place a translation onto a screen

- Use the opportunity to show the congregation the AIATSIS Language Map (as a way of sharing the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture and to highlight the traditional custodians of your area.



Homily Notes

Most Rev. Charles Gauci - Bishop of Darwin

This week we have been celebrating NAIDOC week – which was rescheduled from July due to the COVID Pandemic. NATSICC, our Catholic organisation representing our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, have provided this resource to assist Parishes, schools and organisations to celebrate our First Australians.

Today we acknowledge the ancient cultures of our First Nations here in Australia.

We celebrate that God has always been present with, and loved, our First Peoples.

So often others have decided what they thought best for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. As Catholics, moved by the principles of the dignity of all human beings as equals, we undertake to support and walk with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters. They need to determine their own destiny.

We offer support in this self-determination out of a profound love and respect based on our Christian belief.

Our First Nations Peoples face many challenges, including generational trauma.

- In Christ we find hope and know that God walks with us.
- As the First Peoples of this land they hold a special place in our hearts.
- There is much that we can learn from them. We need to listen.
- Christ brings all cultures to a fullness.

Christ reached out to others, He did not just wait for them to come to Him. Following His example we reach out in love and mutual respect to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island brothers and sisters.

+Charles Gauci
Bishop of Darwin

THE TREE OF LIFE

OVERVIEW AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Tree of Life activity is a Cross Cultural Awareness opportunity that uses a tangible object (the tree) as the basis to explore aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture, Faith and Spirituality. Students may identify the similarities and differences with their own cultures.

The activity may take place over a single day, a week or several weeks depending on the structure that is utilised. Each of the steps can be expanded, removed or adapted to your own area. For example, if you have local community members that speak Language, the Languages could be expanded upon and include visits and presentations.

The activity will yield the best outcomes if the Local Community is engaged and consulted in designing and delivering the steps wherever possible. Use the 'Your NATSICC' section at www.natsicc.org.au to find the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Ministry. If there isn't a local Ministry, your local Council will have contact details for the local Language group.

PREPARATION

When learning and teaching about Australia's First Peoples, it is vital to work alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, groups and communities in your school community to ensure Cultural protocols are maintained.

Online platforms are being utilised Nationally to keep communities connected. They can also be utilised to include local Elders and Traditional Custodians in planning and presentations.

Prior to undertaking the activity (particularly the Language section), it is advised that teachers first read <https://gambay.com.au/teachers>. These notes have been compiled to support teachers in teaching about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages. Additionally, your Diocesan Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Office is an excellent resource and source of advice.



JOIN OVER 500 PARISHES, SCHOOLS AND ORGANISATIONS THAT ARE DISPLAYING A NATSICC ACKNOWLEDGEMENT PLAQUE.

See the back page of resources for details.



STEP 1: CREATE A TREE OF LIFE

Learning Opportunity

Discuss the native trees of the local area and research the various ways that Traditional Custodians used flora and fauna for food, medicine and culture.

Additional Resources that could be incorporated:

Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment – Laudato Si <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o3Lz7dmn1eM> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcP5E2trsX4>

The silhouette of the tree becomes the foundation upon which your activity can grow and form. The other aspects of the activity 'branch' out from this basic structure. Options for construction:

Wall Display

- Using black or painted paper, create an outline of a tree in a prominent space within the classroom or meeting room.
- Ensure the tree has a main trunk section with branches forming outwards. Be sure to leave room for individual leaves to be added.

Plant Pot Display

- Cover a large plant pot with paper or decorations (or ask an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person to paint it).
- Fill the pot with clay or soil. Avoid using Potting Mix for health reasons.
- Place a fallen branch (without leaves), into the pot and display in a prominent position.

STEP 2: INCORPORATE TRADITIONAL ART

Learning Opportunity

This activity is an opportunity for students to research and discover the techniques used by the Traditional Custodians of their area. You could invite a local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artist to host an online presentation to explain the various symbols and painting techniques traditionally used by the local people.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork has, for thousands of years, used symbolism to display deep and complex concepts that are interpreted through the lens of culture and spirituality learned from Elders. Each symbol carries meaning and significance. Artists have used these traditional techniques to paint bible stories and express their Christian faith.

Art Activities:

- Art and Faith Activity: Renowned Aboriginal Artist Shirley Purdie shares her story and explains how her faith is depicted in her artwork. A number of activities for students to complete are included - <http://bit.ly/shirleypurdie>
- Paint Individual Leaves: Download the leaf template from the 2020 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday resources at www.natsicc.org.au and invite students to use their newly acquired knowledge to depict their own faith. Once dried, these leaves can be placed on the tree. Alternatively, students can paint large gum leaves. Students could share their stories of faith and use of Traditional Symbols with the class or group.

ACTIVITY OUTCOMES

By using the Tree of Life as a base, the students will have explored the areas of Traditional art, language and faith systems and will have explored their own faith journey through a different lens. The Tree of Life can be displayed throughout the year to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture in various celebrations and events. Examples could be Christmas, Sorry Day, Reconciliation week or NAIDOC.

STEP 4: LANGUAGE

Learning Opportunity

The Language aspect of the activity highlights the linguistic and cultural diversity that exists in this Country. When learning and teaching about Australia's First languages, it is vital to work alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, groups and Communities in your school community.

Listen to Languages: : Gambay First Languages Map - <https://gambay.com.au/map>

Language Groups - <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/aiatsis-map-indigenous-australia>

Language Activities:

- Learn about the local Traditional language by either inviting a Traditional Custodian to work with the class via an online platform or research online (using the links provided above).
- Ask the students to find words that are linked to the tree - roots, wood, trunk, bark, branches, leaves, etc. Put these words on your Tree of Life display.
- Research Traditional words for Christian terms – God, Creator, Amen etc.

STEP 5: FAITH

Learning Opportunity

By reflecting on quotes by Deacon Boniface Perdjert and St John Paul II, students will gain a better understanding of the role that spirituality and faith play in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics. They will also be able to draw correlations to their own faith systems.

Activity Resources: <http://www.natsicc.org.au/a-tribute-to-deacon-boniface.html> and <http://www.natsicc.org.au/st-john-paul-resources.html>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics knew God thousands of years before the arrival of the first Missionaries. He spoke through the birds, the tress and the other animals. Deacon Boniface Perdjert - Australia's first Permanent (and Aboriginal) Deacon speaks of this knowledge in a beautiful and relatable way.

Saint John Paul II, when he spoke to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics in 1986, acknowledged the deep spiritual connection that Australia's First Peoples have to the Creator. Both Deacon Boniface and Saint John Paul II give us an opportunity to explore the relationship that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics have with God from different Cultural perspectives.

Faith Activities:

Using the links above students can:

- Select a quote from both Deacon Boniface and Saint John Paul II and find the similarities
- Write a quote that speaks to them on an A4 piece of paper and place near the Tree of Life
- Using the text of St John Paul II's speech in 1986 or Deacon Boniface's story, explore the key messages and discuss ways in which they speak to Australian society today
- Create a blog expressing the impact that the messages of both Catholic leaders have had upon their own faith and relationship with God. Perhaps the blog could be hosted on the school website or social media account.

NATSICC ACKNOWLEDGEMENT PLAQUES

The practice of inclusion forms an important part of rebuilding the relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and non Indigenous Australians. The erection of a plaque in a Parish, School or Organisation is a symbol of welcome for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and an Acknowledgment that there is an understanding of Australia's past.

The NATSICC plaque is the first ever to be endorsed by the Australian Catholic Bishops for use in Schools, Parishes and Organisations.

The plaque features artwork designed by the Murri Ministry team in Brisbane, Queensland and depicts Reconciliation and togetherness in Christ.

Printed on aluminium and sealed with an automotive quality UV resistant clear coat, the plaque can be displayed inside or outside, ensuring your's is a place of welcome for Australia's First peoples for years to come.



We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians who have walked upon and cared for this land for thousands of years.

We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.



www.natsicc.org.au

Plaques can be purchased at www.natsicc.org.au

Two sizes are available:

A4 - \$55*

A3 - \$110*

* Prices quoted do not include GST (for members of the GST Religious group). Non members of the group and individuals may purchase using a separate link.



The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Catholic Council

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