



APOSTOLIC NUNCIATURE
AUSTRALIA

PO Box 3633
Manuka ACT 2603

23 November 2016

Prot. No. 1084/16

Dear Mr Lochowiak,

I hasten to transmit to you, in digital form, a Papal Letter addressed to you as Chairperson of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council.

I will read the Papal Letter during mass on Sunday next at St Christopher's Cathedral, Canberra, for the National celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of the Apostolic Visit of Saint John Paul II to Alice Springs.

I will forward a printed copy of the Papal Letter to you when it arrives from the Secretariat of State.

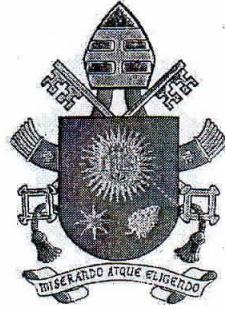
With sentiments of kind regards, I remain

Devotedly yours in Christ,

✠ Adolfo Tito Yllana
Tit. Archbishop of Montecorvino
Apostolic Nuncio

Mr John Lochowiak
Chairperson
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Catholic Council
Otherway Centre
80 Payneham Rd
Stepney SA 5069

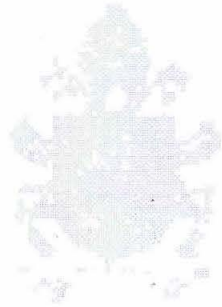
[Enclosure]



*To Mr John Lochowiak
Chairperson
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council*

I send cordial greetings and best wishes to you and the entire Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the visit of Saint John Paul II to Alice Springs. I assure you of my spiritual closeness as you reflect on the many ways in which Almighty God has blessed your community through that historic visit.

This anniversary affords me the happy opportunity to express my deep esteem for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and for your ancient cultural heritage. Uniting my voice to that of Saint John Paul II, I encourage you in his words: "Your culture, which shows the lasting genius and dignity of your race, must not be allowed to disappear. Do not think that your gifts are worth so little that you should no longer bother to maintain them. Share them with each other and teach them to your children. Your songs, your stories, your paintings, your dances, your languages, must never be lost." For when you share the noble traditions of your community, you also witness to the power of the Gospel to perfect and purify every



society, and in this way God's holy will is accomplished. I pray that this occasion will provide an opportunity to deepen your love for Christ and for one another, offering a convincing and tangible sign that we are "no longer strangers and sojourners, but... fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (*Eph 2:19*).

Commending you and all the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to the intercession of Saint Mary of the Cross McKillop, I willingly impart my Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of joy and peace in the Lord.

From the Vatican, 29 November 2016

Francis