



# Together in the Spirit

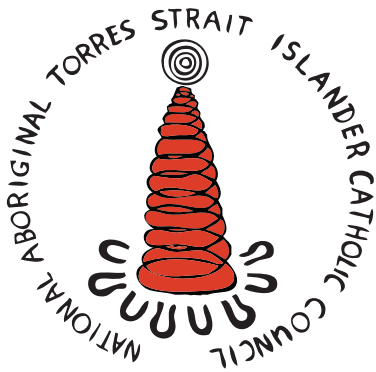
Learn from Me for I am Gentle and Humble in Heart ...  
Matt 11:29

**NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SUNDAY CELEBRATION  
LIVESTREAMED FROM ST FRANCIS XAVIER CATHEDRAL 11.30AM(EST) 5 JULY.  
DETAILS AT [WWW.NATSICC.ORG.AU](http://WWW.NATSICC.ORG.AU)**



2020 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday Resources  
Sunday 5 July 2020





#### 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, Clint McGoldrick, Fr Frank Brennan

#### Cover artwork acknowledgement:

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

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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.

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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.

As a Council, we prayed upon and discerned for many months as to the theme for this year's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday. While there were many options discussed, the developing COVID-19 situation and its widespread effects and concerns throughout our communities, made our decision on the theme clear. Together in the Spirit.

Whether we are able to come together physically in Churches, or via a digital platform, we feel enriched by the fact that, as Australians, will be 'Together in the Spirit' on 5 July 2020. The Gospel of the day calls for those of us that are weary, to share our burdens with God. Communities around Australia, both First Nations and non-Indigenous, have endured bushfires, droughts and now a pandemic, it is only natural that our spirit also becomes weary.

There are already many burdens that exist in our communities. With the new challenges presented in times like these, it is important that we continue to place our trust in God, and try even harder to embody the spiritual gifts of empathy, friendship and love for one another.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced NATSICC to rethink the ways in how we empower Catholics to celebrate our special day. This year, by modifying our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday resources to work in a digital setting, we are also holding the first-ever live-streamed, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday Mass from the St Francis Xavier Cathedral in Adelaide from 11am EST.

We are inviting everyone around Australia - and the World - to join us on 5 July 2020, as we come 'Together in the Spirit' to celebrate the gifts of spirituality and culture.





# About these Resources

These resources have been designed by the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council to inspire and assist Parishes and Schools to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday during a challenging time.

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](http://www.natsicc.org.au) that can be used at either online Mass or Traditional Mass settings.

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# Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country and ceremonies

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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](http://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.



A silver laptop is open on a white desk. The screen displays the text: "Should we do an Acknowledgement of Country at the start of an online Mass, video or conference call?". The background is a blurred indoor setting with a window showing a sunset or sunrise.

# Should we do an Acknowledgement of Country at the start of an online Mass, video or conference call?

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.



# Land: A Generation Point for Existence

By Clint McGoldrick

Clint McGoldrick is a descendent from the Worimi people of Forster, NSW. He is a teacher within Edmund Rice Education Australia, a ACU Masters Theology Graduate, and a Deacon Candidate for the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

The starting point for Aboriginal Spirituality is creation. Creation narratives describe a period of intense creativity that contains the blueprint for all life: there was a period of dark, featureless matter from which the first ancestral beings emerged. The first Ancestral Spirits took shape and appearance of humans and animals, who moved across the landscapes creating the entire natural world. After this period, the ancestral spirits remained in the land and co-existed with the first people whom they brought into being: they assumed the identity of numinous, totemic spirits. With the spirits being responsible for the shaping of creation and animation of all life, the first people inherited the maintenance of creation: the creative spirits are the true landowners, and humans are the trustees, responsible to the creative spirits for the stewardship of the land. Law subsequently created a reminder of how to care for creation and that people were in a relationship with all species, land features and sacred sites. A partnership between the land and its people nurtured a spiritual attuneness of one to another - "...a corporate organic whole, at least as animate, sentient, intelligent and self-conscious as any of its organic parts." [1]

Life imbued creation, where Dreaming (originating from eternity) became the continual obligation of maintaining moral order. Spiritual Dreaming can be considered a logos, an 'every when', a connection to land existing through the laws developed at the time of creation.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday Celebration 5 July 2020



Physical Dreaming is the day to day living that requires Aboriginal people to be custodians who are responsible for relationships with all species and sacred sites, to preserve this essence of Law. A subsistent, nomadic lifestyle allowed Aboriginal people to remain accountable to the ecological world which accepted "...indigenous intrusion and use of that ecology only on sound practices of interaction with the spirit of the land, manifested in strict rules or respect and tradition." [2] An oligarchy ensured that Aboriginal people and groups gave responsibility for different parts and features of the land, where a law of averages ensured different people cared for the whole land.

Ritual brings the spiritual and physical Dreaming of Aboriginal people together: it was a potent reminder of important cosmogenic, cosmological, and temporal truths. Aboriginal lifestyle incorporated sacramental actions and initiations, lore, which allowed the passing of sacred Law through each subsequent generation. The poetic languages of song, ceremony and story gave Aboriginal people voices that transcended from the underworld, allowing the spiritual existence on the other side to reflect the material existence on this side, creating an interpenetrating connectedness.

The land is the generation point of existence: living itself is the maintenance of creation and the ancestral spirits. Living itself is a religion.

#### Bibliography

[1] Stockton, Eugene, and Catholic Commission for Justice Peace. This Land, Our Mother. CCJP Occasional Papers (Catholics in Coalition for Justice and Peace) No. 9. Surry Hills [N.S.W.]: CCJP, 1986.

[2] Everett, Kristina. Impossible realities: The (re) emergence of Aboriginal culture in the city. Saarbrücken: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2011

## Suggestions for physical and digital Acknowledgements

### On Parish grounds, buildings, newsletters and websites:

The \_\_\_\_\_ Catholic Parish acknowledge the \_\_\_\_\_ people, 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.

### On published documents (traditional and electronic) that contains imagery of deceased persons:

In a prominent position:

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

### Event Signage

#### Acknowledgement of Country (language group unknown):

We would like to show our respect and acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land, of Elders past, present and future, on which this event takes place.

#### Acknowledgement of Country using a specific nation:

We would like to acknowledge the \_\_\_\_\_ people who are the Traditional Custodians of this land. We would also like to pay respect to the Elders past, present and future of the \_\_\_\_\_ and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples present.

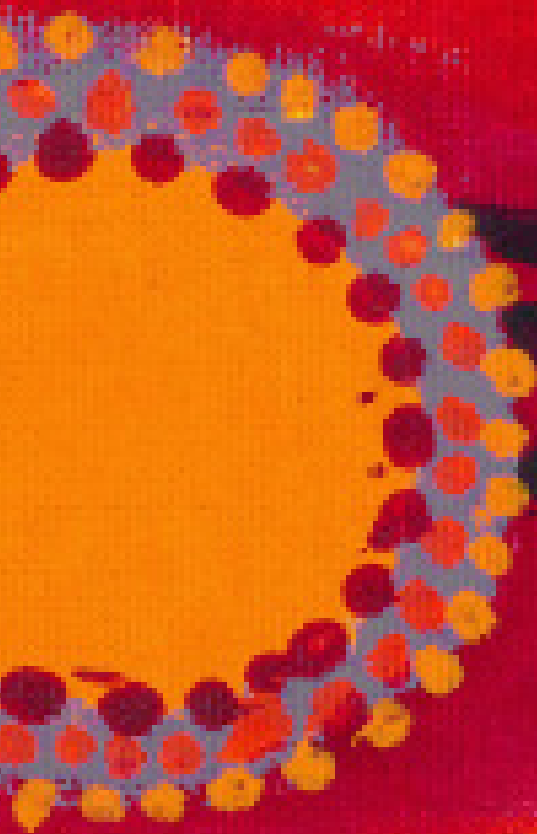


# Together in

Aboriginal and Torres Strait

5 July





# in the Spirit

Strait Islander Sunday  
2020



# 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





# 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

Here I am Lord  
The Power of your Love

### Offertory

Isaiah 49( I will never forget you)

### Communion

Like a Shepherd [CWBII (2016) no. 538  
I heard the voice of Jesus Say [in CWBII (2016) no. 512 (cf. Gospel).

### Recessional

Sing Hosanna  
How Great though art

## Readings

### First Reading

Zechariah 9: 9-10

### Responsorial Psalm

Psalms 145: 1-2, 8-9, 10-11, 13-14

### Second Reading

Romans 8: 9, 11-13

### Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth; you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom.  
Alleluia!

### Gospel

Matthew 11: 25-30

## 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 beginning of the Mass.

### A RITE OF WATER BLESSING

Alternatively, if more appropriate, a Water Blessing could be used.

A suggested text for this Blessing is:

Lord, make us feel your invitation to 'come to the water'.

**At the very beginning You blessed the water, your great gift to us, and now we ask that Your blessing be renewed in this water here today. We ask that through this water blessing we will all be renewed. Water to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is always a sign of God's peace and fulfilment in everything that is good; the promise of food, of Your love, and protection, and Your power to love one another as true Christians. Lord, this truly is a sign of the new life in Christ, which in Baptism we have all received.**

**Through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The priest may add to this Water Blessing.

Water 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 social 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 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday 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](http://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](http://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 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time and the day that the Australian Bishops and our National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council have invited us to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday. 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 Sunday 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

Fr Frank Brennan



Auntie Elsie Heiss with Fr Frank Brennan

On this day 250 years ago, 5 July 1770, Captain Cook's Endeavour was stranded in what was then named the Endeavour River undergoing repairs. Tupia the Tahitian navigator and the English botanist Joseph Banks were ashore looking at botanical specimens. But Tupia was happy to try out using a gun, hunting for wildlife. According to Banks' journal, they encountered two natives 'digging in the ground for some kind of roots; on seeing him they ran away with great precipitation'. The popular writer Peter Fitzsimons describes the 'two natives peacefully collecting bush tucker as Tupia stands about them, gun brandished'. Tupia went on hunting, firing many shots at wildlife. What must the local Guugu Yimithirr people have thought? Their first encounter with foreign cultures – English and Tahitian. Their first sighting and sounding of a gun. What sort of beginning was this for coming 'Together in the Spirit' – the theme of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday exactly 250 years later?

Today we hear those consoling words of Jesus, 'Come to me all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest.' We gather 'Together in the Spirit' during the COVID-19 Pandemic and in the wake of riots and protests in the USA following upon George Floyd's death under the knee of a white police officer. Here in Australia we have joined the chorus that 'Black Lives Matter', drawing attention yet again to the appalling statistics of Aboriginal deaths in custody.

St Paul in his Letter to the Romans reminds us that our interests 'are not in the unspiritual, but in the spiritual, since the Spirit of God has made his home' in us. In the Uluru Statement from the Heart, Indigenous representatives told us that their 'sovereignty is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or "mother nature", and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors.

# Homily Notes

Continued....

This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty.'

Let's hope that the 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart can help to change hearts, providing a more secure place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the life of the Australian nation. At this Eucharist, we gather in the hope expressed by the prophet Zechariah in today's first reading when the Lord says: 'He will proclaim peace for the nations. His empire shall stretch from sea to sea, from the River to the ends of the earth.' Despite the chaos and uncertainty of these days, we gather, uplifted by the message of the Amazon Synod, and hoping for better times in our Church with the coming of the 2021 Plenary Council.

After the Amazon Synod Pope Francis published his document *Querida Amazonia* in which he said (##20-21):

Efforts to build a just society require a capacity for fraternity, a spirit of human fellowship. Hence, without diminishing the importance of personal freedom, it is clear that the original peoples of the Amazon region have a strong sense of community. It permeates "their work, their rest, their relationships, their rites and celebrations. Everything is shared; private areas – typical of modernity – are minimal. Life is a communal journey where tasks and responsibilities are apportioned and shared on the basis of the common good. There is no room for the notion of an individual detached from the community or from the land". Their relationships are steeped in the surrounding nature, which they feel and think of as a reality that integrates society and culture, and a prolongation of their bodies, personal, familial and communal:

"The morning star draws near,  
the wings of the hummingbirds flutter;  
my heart pounds louder than the cascade:  
with your lips I will water the land  
as the breeze softly blows among us"  
All this makes even more unsettling the sense of bewilderment and uprootedness felt by those

Indigenous people who feel forced to migrate to the cities, as they attempt to preserve their dignity amid more individualistic urban habitats and a hostile environment. How do we heal all these hurts, how do we bring serenity and meaning to these uprooted lives? Given situations like these, we ought to appreciate and accompany the efforts made by many of those groups to preserve their values and way of life, and to integrate in new situations without losing them, but instead offering them as their own contribution to the common good.

On 12 February 2020, Archbishop Coleridge, President of the ACBC said: 'Pope Francis' focus on Indigenous cultures in the Amazon speaks strongly to the Australian context.' 'It's good that the Pope's words on indigenous peoples come as we in this country consider the woeful lack of progress on closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in key areas.' 'The issues faced by many in the Amazon are not foreign to Australia, and the Holy Father's words come as a challenge and encouragement to us too.'

The Plenary Council Discernment and Writing Groups have now issued their series of six Discernment Papers. The group asking how we might be more missionary and evangelising have said: 'Nationally, we must forge deeper relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, oppose any prejudice, and actively work for reconciliation.' In today's gospel, Jesus blesses his Father 'for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children.'

This Discernment Group has laid down the challenge: 'The Church in Australia must be shaped by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and spirituality for it to be authentically a Church of this land. When the Church sinks its roots deep into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, it will authentically be a Church in the land with a new vision and energy for mission.'





People talking to Jesus in the  
Bough Shed (Queenie McKenzie)

Another discernment group, asks how we might be more inclusive, participative and synodal, including 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics, who have not been well treated in Australian society and whose culture and spirituality was for so long unacknowledged, even though they have so much to contribute to the wider Church.' They have proposed that Indigenous 'contributions and concerns, expressed through the state and territory ministries and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council, should be joyfully received and acted upon at local and diocesan levels, particularly in relation to Reconciliation Action Plans, the recognition of language and culture, the identification and appropriate training of future Deacons and catechists, Cross-Cultural Training for non- Indigenous ministers and measures to improve faith formation, employment and mental wellbeing.'

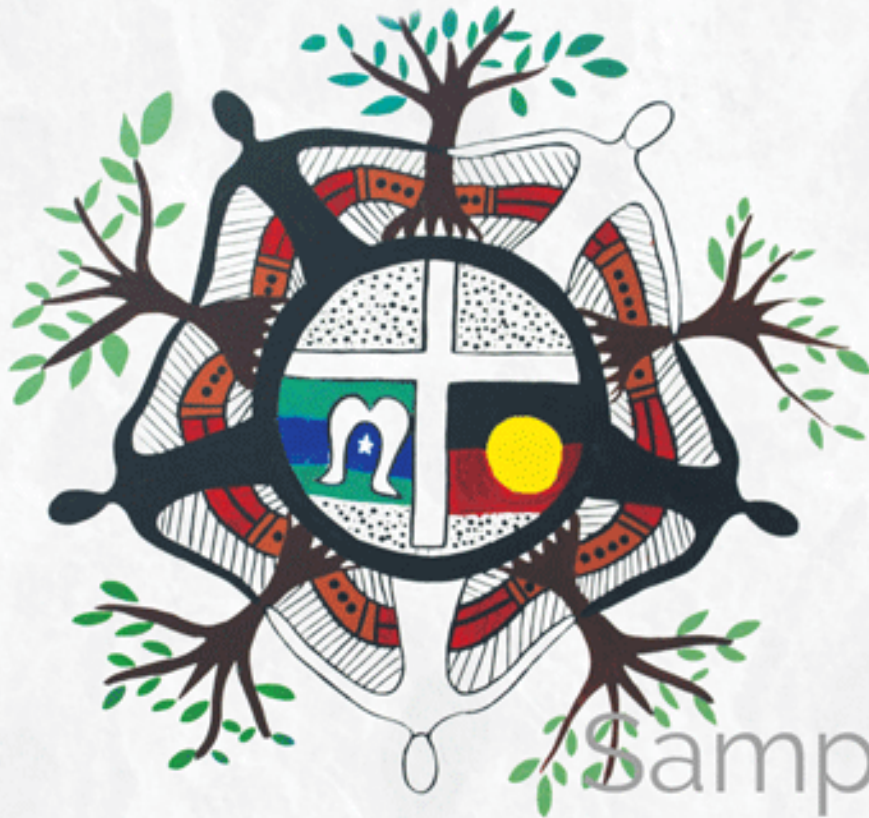
Another group discerning how our Church might be more humble, healing and merciful have spoken of a Church in Trauma. They have insisted on the need for us all to start at the beginning of the trauma in this land. 'The first roots of our contemporary country Australia were founded in trauma. The double trauma of a penal colony of confinement and punishment meeting the subsequent subjugation of our First Nations peoples has been written into our identity as a Nation. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are one of the most traumatised and disenfranchised peoples of the world. Our Church was present from these

earliest times, and therefore carries these disturbing storylines in its history and identity.' We recall the words of the Uluru Statement: 'Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.'

We remember Pope John Paul II's address at Alice Springs in 1986 when he told us: 'You are part of Australia and Australia is part of you. And the Church herself in Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until you have made your contribution to her life and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others.'

This discernment group has said, 'The Uluru Statement from the Heart continues to echo these sentiments and a deep cry for healing. Humble listening will bring healing for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The principle of subsidiarity is key – the days of others deciding for them must be over. A new and real engagement, standing together in solidarity, is a merciful and humble way to a new pathway of healing.'

At this Eucharist, we come seeking the consolation of the Lord's presence as we hear Jesus declare to us: '**Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.**'



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](http://www.natsicc.org.au)

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

See the back page of resources for details.

# 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](http://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.





## 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](http://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 different lens. The Tree of Life can be displayed throughout the year 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.

...the areas or Traditional art, language and faith systems and will have explored their own faith journey through a ...to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture in various celebrations and events. Examples could be

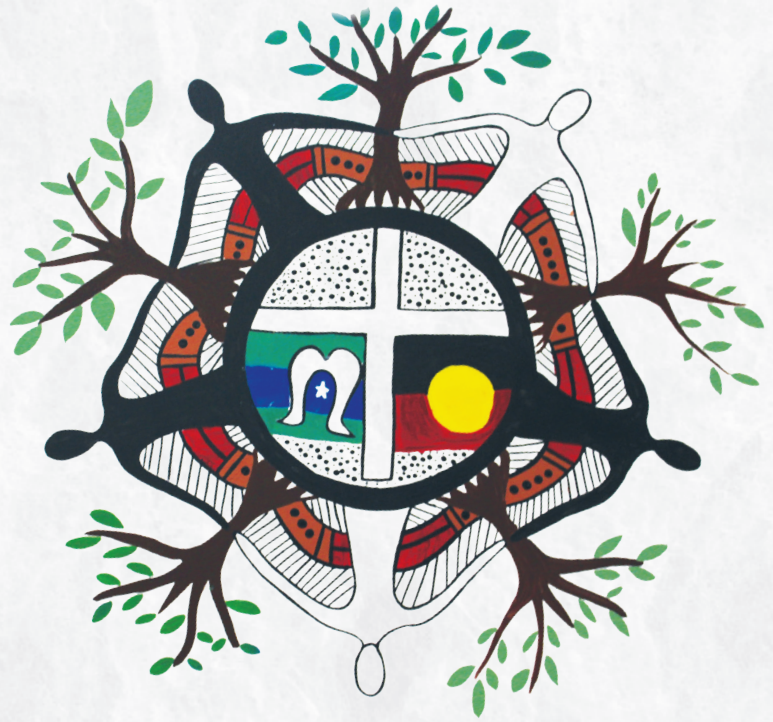
# NATSICC ACKNOWLEDGEMENT PLAQUES

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](http://www.natsicc.org.au)

## Plaques can be purchased at [www.natsicc.org.au](http://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

80 Payneham Rd. Stepney | (08) 8363 2963 | [www.natsicc.org.au](http://www.natsicc.org.au)