



30th Anniversary of
Saint John Paul II's address to
Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander peoples

A national day of celebration - 27 November 2016

RESOURCES

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.

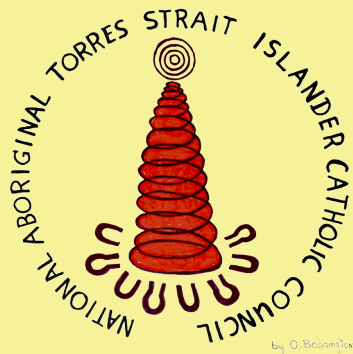
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- Chairperson - Bishop Eugene Hurley
- Bishop Don Sproxtton
- Bishop Joseph Oudemann
- Bishop Columba Macbeth Green
- Executive Secretary - Trish Mowbray

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Cover artwork: 'Rebirth' was created by the Youth participants at the 2003 NATSICC National Assembly in Adelaide and depicts the event's theme: The Time for Rebirth is Now. Adelaide artist Delwyn Mannix was commissioned to create the charred tree against the ochre hued sky and was inspired by Saint John Paul II's address to Aboriginal people in Alice Springs: "If you stay closely united, you are like a tree standing in the middle of a bush-fire sweeping through the timber. The leaves are scorched and the tough bark is scarred and burned; but inside the tree the sap is still flowing, and under the ground the roots are still strong. Like that tree you have endured the flames, and you still have the power to be reborn. The time for this rebirth is now!"

A celebration of hope and rebirth!

In partnership with the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council (NATSICC) offer these resources to assist in preparing a day of celebration on 27 November 2016.

Jesus spoke directly to the hearts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on 29 November 1986 in Australia's heart – Alice Springs. The message was delivered to our people by his devoted apostle Saint John Paul II. We had travelled along our well-worn trade routes from every corner of Australia to encounter God on that day.

As Saint John Paul II spoke, a wind storm picked up the red soil from the Earth and swirled it amongst our people. The dust seemed to intertwine with the words of love, hope and empathy. The message touched our souls and it touched our skin. Never before had we felt so welcome in the house of Jesus as when Saint John Paul II said:

"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."

The impact of this day on our lives cannot be measured. It provided the encouragement for the establishment of Aboriginal and Islander Catholic Ministries all over Australia and it lit the fire in our hearts which still provides the warmth, energy and strength for us to continue. We now have over 120,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics in Australia and the support of our Australian Catholic Bishops on our journey of faith.

This year marks the 30th Anniversary of Saint John Paul II's visit to Australia and we need his words now more than ever - our people have the worst health in Australia as well as the highest incarceration and youth suicide rates in the world. We need rebirth now!

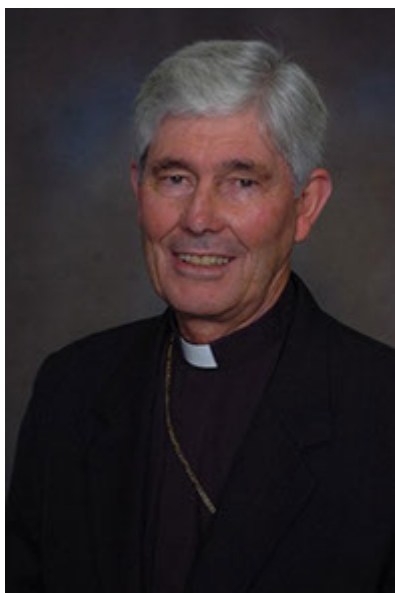
John Lochowiak

John Lochowiak
NATSICC Chairperson

Contents

Letter from Bishop Eugene Hurley	4
Liturgy Notes	6
Suggested Prayers	8
Homily Notes	9
Quotes	10
Commentary	12
An Aboriginal perspective	14
Classroom Activities	15
Celebrating the Day	16
Contemporary Challenges	17
Online Resources	18
Items for sale	19





A CELEBRATION OF HOPE AND REBIRTH!

In partnership with the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council (NATSICC) invites and encourages you and your diocese to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of Pope St John Paul II's visit to Alice Springs.

It is appropriate that we celebrate and observe the thirtieth anniversary of the visit as we prepare for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in Advent. As with both, the theme is one of hope and rebirth.

It is an opportune time to remind us of the important words of Pope St John Paul II, '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 is the right time and place when we, the Church, are invited and encouraged to listen to our Indigenous sisters and brothers and look at specific actions we need to take to ensure the meaningful roles and contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our Church and society. This timely theme is an invitation and call to us to create and ensure a change in societal attitude and promote not only rebirth and hope but justice and equal rights of Indigenous peoples.

We invite you to celebrate the day as a diocese and encourage parishes and faith communities to join us in celebrating. Not only is this a call to inspire faith communities to promote a greater contribution for First Nations peoples within our Church.

It is also a call to actively face the massive assault and injustices on the very lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Those assaults include the high rate of suicide and incarceration among our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

I invite you to use the material provided on the website and enclosed to promote the celebration within your diocese. A copy of this letter and resources will be sent to each parish and school to encourage faith communities to celebrate and promote the day.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Most Rev D Eugene Hurley
Chairman
Bishops Commission for Relations with Aboriginal
and Torres Strait Islander Peoples



"As the Pope completed the lengthy speech, he took a large gum branch, reached into a clay coolamon which later would be used in the Alice Springs church for baptisms, and blessed the people with water.

It was at that moment that the lightning sounded and the heavens opened. All of us in the crowd were convinced that grace and nature were one and indivisible at that moment in the red centre. The Centralian Advocate reported that 'as an electrical storm was threatening the gathering of about 4000 people, most of the thunder was coming from the podium.'"

Fr Frank Brennan

Liturgy Notes

Why not prepare a liturgy of thanksgiving for Saint John Paul II?

Below are elements that you may like to include.

Opening Hymns of Praise and Thanksgiving

Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven (AOV 1/78)
Praise to You, O Christ, our Saviour (AOV 1/28)
Bless the Lord (AOV 2/83)

Opening Prayer

O God, who are rich in mercy
and who willed that the Blessed John Paul II
should preside as Pope over your universal Church,
grant, we pray, that instructed by his teaching,
we may open our hearts to the saving grace of Christ,
the sole Redeemer of mankind.
Who lives and reigns.

1st Reading:

Ephesians 4:7-16 (St John Paul II, optional memorial) or Reading of the Day

Gospel

Luke 13:1-9 (St John Paul II, optional memorial) or Gospel of the Day

A rite of Water Blessing (Accompanied by 'We are Sorry' and Song of praise)

It is customary in some areas, when Aboriginal people gather for important ceremonies to use water. Water containers can be a large shell or coolamon and a small branch from an appropriate native tree can be used to sprinkle the water. Please collaborate with your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander group to ensure this rite of water blessing is appropriate.

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 with 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.

Water to Aboriginal people is always a sign of God's peace and fulfillment in everything that is good; the promise of food, of harmony with ourselves, and the bush around us.

Introduction (Celebrant)

The God of love has created us to live in unity, harmony and equality. Division and hatred find no home in God. We pray that we may be one.

Intentions

1. We pray for Pope Francis and all Bishops particularly the Bishop Commission for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples: that their leadership of the Church be blessed and that the Church be a source of blessing for all your people. We pray to the Lord. R. Lord hear our prayer.

2. We pray for all the peoples of Australia: that we may learn to respect the dignity of different cultures, faith traditions and religious observances. We pray to the Lord. R. Lord, hear our prayer.

3. We pray for all Indigenous People of Australia: that they will be given strength and direction to find their place in the Church, envisaged by Saint John Paul, and that the Church will help them respond to their calling. We pray to the Lord. R. Lord, hear our prayer.

4. We pray for all the children of the world: that they will be protected from all harm and encouraged to reach their full human and spiritual potential. We pray to the Lord. R. Lord, hear our prayer.

5. We pray for all levels of Government in Australia: that they may be blessed with the wisdom to know the truth and openness to hear the plight of those in need, especially the cries of the poor. We pray to the Lord. R. Lord hear our prayer.

6. We pray for all people imprisoned, particularly our young people: that they will be guided towards a better life and a deeper awareness that they are needed and loved. We pray to the Lord. R. Lord, hear our prayer.

CONCLUSION (Celebrant)

God of Peace, the Eucharist calls us to be one. We pray that the world may become one in sharing its resources in a spirit of equality, justice and peace. We make this prayer in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen

Praying with the Speech

Choose 1 or 2 excerpts from the speech that resonate with you and pray over the following questions:

- How does this message make you feel?
- What does St John Paul II ask me to do?

Aboriginal Our Father

To be used only when an Aboriginal reader is present

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 have done wrong, we are sorry.

Help us Father, not to sin again.

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.

You are our Father, You live in Heaven.

We talk to You, Father, You are good.



Prayer used with permission from Broome Diocese

Suggested Prayers

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

Gathering Prayer

God of love,
you are the creator of this land
and of all good things.
Our hope is in you
because you gave your son Jesus
to reconcile the world to you.
We pray for your strength and grace
to forgive, accept and love one another
as you love us
and forgive and accept us
in the sacrifice of your Son.

(Prepared by Wontulp Bi-Buya Indigenous Theology
Working Group) NATSICC 2003

Prayer of Guidance

Creator of all things,
Both seen and unseen.
Speak to us in your great wisdom.
Make us strong as we seek
Your help and guidance.
Teach us to love all people
Regardless of race or colour or belief.
May we listen with great care
To the heartbeat of this land
And to its people
Who cared for it so well
And for so long.
May the peace these people and their land
Have always enjoyed
Continue to be strengthened and preserved
By all who wish to come and be part of
This country and its 'Ancient Dreaming'.

(Used with the permission of Elizabeth Pike,1998).

Saint John Paul II Feast Day Prayer

O Holy Trinity, we thank you for having given
to the Church, Pope John Paul II, and for
having made him shine with your fatherly
tenderness, the glory of the Cross of Christ and
the splendor of the Spirit of love

He, trusting completely in your infinite mercy
and in the maternal intercession of Mary,
has shown himself in the likeness of Jesus
the Good Shepherd and has pointed out
to us holiness as the path to reach eternal
communion with You.

Grant us, through his intercession, according
to your will, the grace that we implore, in the
hope that he will soon be numbered among
your saints.

Homily Notes

Firstly let us remember and acknowledge again that for thousands of years before the arrival of Western settlers, the sole inhabitants of this vast land were Indigenous peoples: the ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS. In a real sense the settlers were invaders in this land which was named “terra nullius”, the land which was deemed to belong to no one! Many injustices and atrocities have been committed against the Indigenous people of the land since.

A National Apology to the Stolen Generations by the Prime Minister on February 13 2008 was indeed an historic and hope- filled moment for Australia. The then president of the Australian Bishops Conference, Archbishop Wilson, said in his Statement: “Today is a great day in the history of our Nation, because it represents a much longed-for point of arrival. But it must not end there. For true healing to take place we must also acknowledge that this National Apology is a point not only of arrival, but a point of hope and a point of departure.”

The journey and process is one of reconciliation and healing.

Bishop Joseph Oudemann

We need workers to walk the road with our non-Indigenous brothers and sisters, to help them understand our beliefs, our hopes and dreams for the future, not only for our benefit, or only for the benefit of those within the Church, but for the benefit of all Australians.

Each of has certain gifts to offer the Church. These gifts differ in each of us. Some are talented singers, dancers and story tellers. Many have a multitude of other gifts. We, by using these gifts and offering them in God's service can be among the labourers who go out to 'bring in the harvest'.

Former NATSICC Chairperson Peter Smith

It would be easy to see the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians as purely an issue of social justice, of economics, or politics. Far more importantly, it is a religious and spiritual issue. For disciples of Jesus there is no black or white. There is no Indigenous or non-Indigenous. There are only fellow disciples, brothers and sisters. Some are strong and some are weak. Some are powerful and some are powerless. Some are rich and some are poor. Some are educated and some are not. Whoever we are, we belong to each other.

We have a responsibility for each other and if we are followers of Jesus, we must carry each other's burdens.

Bishop Michael Putney



Quotes

Inspiration from St. John Paul II's address to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in 1986

'Your culture, which shows the lasting genius and dignity of your race, must not be allowed to disappear... Your songs, your stories, your paintings, your dances, your languages, must never be lost.'

'If you stay closely united, you are like a tree standing in the middle of a bushfire sweeping through the timber. The leaves are scorched and the tough bark is scarred and burned; but inside the tree the sap is still flowing, and under the ground the roots are still strong. Like that tree you have endured the flames, and you still have the power to be reborn. The time for this rebirth is now!'

'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.'

'you have lived in this land and fashioned a culture that endures to this day. And during all this time, the spirit of God has been with you.'

'It is wonderful to see how people ... find points of agreement between their own traditions and those of Jesus and his people ...'

'For thousands of years this culture of yours was free to grow without interference by people from other places. You lived your lives in spiritual closeness to the land, with its animals, birds, fishes, waterholes, rivers, hills and mountains. You did not spoil the land, use it up, exhaust it, and then walk away from it. You realised that your land was related to the source of life.'

'The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ speaks all languages. It esteems and embraces all cultures. It supports them in everything human and, when necessary, it purifies them. Always and everywhere the Gospel uplifts and enriches cultures with the revealed message of a loving and merciful God.'

'You have learned how to survive, whether on your own lands, or scattered among the towns and cities. Though your difficulties are not yet over, you must learn to draw on the endurance which your ancient ceremonies have taught you. Endurance brings with it patience; patience helps you to find the way ahead, and gives you courage for your journey.'

'The old ways can draw new life and strength from the Gospel. The message of Jesus Christ can lift up your lives to new heights, reinforce all your positive values and add many others, which only the Gospel in its originality proposes. Take this Gospel into your own language and way of speaking; let its spirit penetrate your communities and determine your behaviour towards each other, let it bring new strength to your stories and your ceremonies.'

'Dear Aboriginal people: the hour has come for you to take on new courage and new hope. You are called to remember the past, to be faithful to your worthy traditions, and to adapt your living culture whenever this is required by your own needs and those of your fellowman.'

'Above all you are called to open your hearts ever more to the consoling, purifying and uplifting message of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who died so that we might all have life, and have it to the full.'

Commentary

This is a commentary by Archbishop Christopher Prowse, from the Archdiocese of Canberra Goulburn, on St John Paul II's "magna carta" speech in Alice Springs 30 years ago. Although the article was written for the 20th anniversary, 10 years ago, the commentary is still helpful in identifying the major themes of the Papal address.

The Meeting Itself

Just before a consideration of the text itself, a few comments regarding the style and tone of the speech itself may be helpful. The uniqueness of the visit resides not merely in the content of the speech itself, but also in the manner in which it was presented. Firstly, it is significant to note that the Pope did not address his words primarily to Australian politicians or even the Australian people as a whole.

He travelled to a city in the centre of the Australian desert and spoke directly to the Aborigines themselves. Secondly, rather than addressing his words solely to Aboriginal Catholics, he spoke to all Aborigines as one people rather than as separated individuals, isolated groups or clans.

Thirdly, the tone of the speech was gently encouraging, affirming, hopeful and respectful. There are no patronising overtones in the speech. Fourthly, when he does address his comments directly to Aboriginal Catholics, he applies Vatican II and post-Vatican II principles of missiology directly to Aboriginal culture.

When these four points are combined and are joined with the content of the speech itself, the Pope's meeting represents a watershed in the Australian Catholic history's relationship with the Aboriginal people.

Content of Address

Aboriginal Culture

In the first section of his discourse, the Pope expresses the Church's esteem and love of the Aboriginal people and culture. The Pope calls for the preservation of Aboriginal culture.

Your culture, which shows the lasting genius and dignity of your race, must not be allowed to disappear...Your songs, your stories, your paintings, your dances, your languages must never be lost.

He then isolates some characteristics of the culture in which he observes are "indications of human strivings" and an openness "to the message of God's revealed wisdom." Such characteristics include: "spiritual closeness to the land", "a quietness of the soul" that was taught by "The silence of the bush", a kinship bond that "spoke of your reverence for birth, life and human generation", an understanding of law "as a guide to living fairly with each other". Parallels can be drawn between these characteristics and the "Dreamtime legends" and the traditions of "those of Jesus and his people."

Clearly, the address up to this stage is eager to affirm the uniqueness and value of Aboriginal culture and to indicate that there are many "points of agreement" with the Christian Gospel. Such an approach opens the way for further respectful dialogue.

Culture Clash

In the next section, the all important aspects of the meeting of two cultures from 1788 till the present are considered. The main point raised in this section is the clear Papal affirmation that the effects of past racist attitudes continue in the present.

John Paul II notes that the Aboriginal culture, so long isolated from contact with other cultures, "was not prepared for the sudden meeting with another people, with different customs and traditions". The shock of such an encounter by a people whose "traditions, the organisation of their lives, and their attitudes to the land" were so different had lasting effects. The Pope then states: "The effects of some of those forces are still alive among you today." He then exemplifies such present effects by recalling that many are "dispossessed of your traditional lands and separated from your tribal ways". Others have "no real place for campfires and kinship observances except on the fringes of country towns." Still for others "work is hard to find, and education in a different, cultural background is difficult." Using strong language, the Pope then adds: "The discrimination caused by racism is a daily experience."

Despite all such continuing hardships, the Aboriginal people have, according to the Pope, endured courageously and must now renew the roots of their



Archbishop Prowse with Evelyn Parkin at Blatherskite Park 2016

ancient culture. During such hardships, the Pope recalls the teachers, doctors, professionals and simple folk who have shown Aboriginal people "the good example of their charity and fraternal solidarity." Also, in this context, he introduces the contribution of the "the missionaries of the Christian faith." In commending their assistance in health, education and social services, he says:

Whatever their human frailty, and whatever mistakes they may have made, nothing can ever minimize the depth of their charity. Nothing can ever cancel out their greatest contribution, which was to proclaim to you Jesus Christ and to establish his Church in your midst.

Opening up this topic allows the Pope to recall the contribution of Archbishop Polding of Sydney to the land question. By so doing, it is made evident that some of the first people to recognise the equality of persons were the missionaries. On the vital issue of land rights, the Pope declares "The Church still supports you today." The address makes it clear that "land rights of people who have never surrendered those rights is not discrimination." We cannot pretend that the past did not exist. He mentions that Christian people are saddened to realize, "many of them

only recently", that "Aboriginal people were transported from their homelands into small areas or reserves where families were broken up, tribes split apart, children orphaned and people forced to live like exiles in a foreign country."

Once again the address makes it clear that the legacy of this history has present day effects that require reconciliation. A just settlement of the existing reserves "still lies unachieved", whilst "The urban problems resulting from the transportation and separation of people still have to be addressed".

The future demands a present attentiveness to "just and mutually recognized agreements with regard to these human problems, even though their causes lie in the past."

The Pope counsels that such agreements are to be based on "the dignity and growth of the human person", that they "must be implemented without causing new injustices", and that the Aborigines themselves must work actively as artisans of their "own dignity of life."

This important section offers fresh insights on racist attitudes and their social consequences and orientations for future engagement. It is clearly a disappointment for those who assume that as past racist laws are being dismantled, present and future responsibility for the past is diminishing. The Pope's address makes it clear that our past history is continuing to have a present discriminatory impact on Aboriginal people.

Future Challenges

The final section of the address is directed towards the future. Emerging principles of inculturation in the Catholic Church are evident in the text and are applied to the Aboriginal culture. Consequently, the address proclaims that the Gospel of Jesus "esteems and embraces all cultures". It not only "supports them in everything human" but also "when necessary, purifies them". Importantly, the Gospel "invites you to become, through and through, Aboriginal Christians."

The Church unites herself with this

Gospel renewal of Aboriginal culture and also "invites you to express the living word of Jesus in ways that speak to your Aboriginal minds and hearts." By allowing the Gospel to "seek out the best things of your traditional ways...you will come to realize more and more your great human and Christian dignity."

Finally, the Pope directs the Aboriginal people to work actively for reconciliation and forgiveness with all Australians. The Church is not to assume a passive role in this reconciliation either. There must be a reciprocal reconciliation. In probably the most quoted passage by Aboriginal people and Church statements since the address was first delivered, the Pope then states:

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.

The tone of this third section appears to be somewhat different from what preceded it. In the first two sections the tone seems to be characterised by carefully discerning the legacies of the past and offering important distinctions. This is done in a pervading sense of compassion with those who have suffered. It is firm in demonstrating solidarity with the Aboriginal people. It dismisses attitudes and policies which have resulted in the perpetuation of discrimination. At the same time it expresses a sense of urgency to effect new and just agreements. In this last section, however, without sacrificing such elements, the address does seem to become more of a proclamation or a call to the renewal of Aboriginal culture within the uplifting and strengthening embrace of the Christian Gospel.

Such reflections, in a sense, may serve as a point of departure for acknowledging John Paul II's speech remains, even after 20 years, a key for future pastoral action with Aboriginal people. Its tone, style and content, as elaborated above, seem to offer themselves in such a manner.

"We must have Courage"

An Aboriginal Perspective on the visit

Just as Paul and Barnabas were bringing a message to the Jews of their time, Pope John Paul II was also bringing the Gospel message to Aboriginal people; indeed, not only to us, but to all Australians as well.

Of course there were some people who did not agree with the Pope's message, just as there were some Jews who did not listen to the message Paul and Barnabas were offering.

For thousands of years Aboriginal people have lived in this land and fashioned their culture that endures to this day. The Spirit of the Creator has been with us. The 'Dreaming' influenced our lives so strongly, that no matter what happens, we remain forever a people that have been touched by the Spirit of the Creator of all things.

The silence of the bush taught us quietness of soul, giving us details of a kinship that spoke of the reverence for birth, life and human generation. We knew that children needed to be loved, and to be full of joy. They need a time to grow in laughter and to play, secure in the knowledge that they belong.

We had great respect for the need of law, as a guide to living fairly with each other. So we created a legal system – very strict it is true; but it made our society orderly; the reason our culture survived, 60,000 years or more, longer than any culture in the world today.

Ceremonies of discipline for young men and women taught them responsibilities as they

came to maturity. It is amazing to see how, when the gospel was accepted, there were many points of agreement between our Aboriginal traditions and the traditions of Jesus and His people. Past hurts cannot be healed by violence, nor are present injustices removed by resentment. The Spirit of forgiveness and compassion is the only key to resolving these hurts.

"If we stand closely united we become like a tree, standing in the middle of a bush fire sweeping through the timbers. The leaves are scorched and burned, and the tough bark is scarred, but inside the tree, the sap is still flowing, and under the ground the roots are still strong."

St John Paul II

A new world is emerging for us, and our contribution must be fully and joyfully received by all Australia

We must have the courage to listen to the words of the Spirit:

"Do not be afraid I have called you by your name, you are mine...
I will give you a new heart, and new hope;
you shall be my people,
and I will be your God,
and shepherd you into the future,
so that you all might have life...
in your own land,
and have it to the full."

This is a reflection from the writings of Elizabeth Pike

Betty Pike (ACM Melbourne)



Classroom Activities



Using the full text of the speech given by Saint John Paul II to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics in 1986, explore the different themes presented. The speech, in its entirety is available at www.natsicc.org.au/saintJP2

Looking deeper into Saint John Paul II's words

- How does the speech speak to our Australian culture today?
- Write a blog expressing some of your thoughts and feelings. Using only words and pictures design a poster that depicts the message of Saint John Paul II to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Find a partner to explain the meaning of your picture. Search for some quotes of Saint John Paul II, particularly his messages to youth.
- Choose one or two quotes that you really like. In small groups present your quotes explaining what you think they mean.

Saints Activity

Often we think of saints as having lived a long time ago. Pope John Paul II is now a Saint. Research another recent (or soon to be) saint, e.g. Saint Teresa of Calcutta, Saint Kateri Tekakwitha or Australia's very own Saint Mary MacKillop.

Find out what was 'saintly' about them. Form small groups and organise a role play about the life of your chosen saint, demonstrating what was holy about this person

Saint John Paul II travelled the world and met with many world leaders. Research some of the leaders and Heads of State that Saint John Paul II met. Choose one person/meeting that you think was interesting.

Why was it interesting? Why was the meeting important?

Celebrating the Day

National Day of Celebration - 27 November 2016

- Attend the major celebration Mass at your Cathedral on 27 November
- Using the Liturgy resources included, prepare a celebration Mass in your Parish or School
- Download the NATSICC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday Slideshow and present it to the congregation before or after Mass. The slideshow highlights the gifts that Australia's first people bring to the Catholic Church in Australia - <http://slide.ly/view/8ff7f414b72f869de407a84e139ffb57>
- Host an evening prior to 27 November (or on the evening of) where Saint John Paul II's speech is viewed in its entirety. Hold a discussion about the elements touched upon and its relevance today.
- Invite members of your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to attend Mass in your Parish
- Include quotes from Saint John Paul II on your website, Mass booklets and newsletters

* All resources available at www.natsicc.org.au



Saint John Paul II with Kaye Mundine and Bishop Ted Collins

Contemporary Challenges

It has been 30 years since Saint John Paul II spoke of the richness and pride of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture whilst, at the same time, he highlighted the injustices and challenges that Australia's first people faced. Fortunately the richness of culture remain through adversity but unfortunately many of the challenges described in 1986 still remain.

The Closing the Gap report card presented by Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull (February 2016) highlights the lack of progress in Indigenous health, life expectancy, education and incarceration. Across Australia, young Aboriginal people are 26 times more likely to be in detention and are more likely to be incarcerated than attend University.

What can you do?

- Read the entire papal address at: www.natsicc.org.au/saintJP2
- Embrace the Principle of Subsidiarity on a personal, Parish, School and organisational level. Subsidiarity requires that decisions are made by the people closest and most affected by the issues and concerns of the community. It also advocates that the individual is sacred. The principle is imperative because every person, family and intermediate group has something original to offer to the community.
- Read the Closing the Gap Report Card to gain an understanding of the challenges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people face on a daily basis <http://closingthegap.dpmc.gov.au/>
- Host a discussion group in your parish around the issues raised by Saint John Paul II's address in Alice Springs
- Visit www.natsicc.org.au to find out if there is an Aboriginal and Islander Catholic Ministry in your Diocese and contact them to learn what they do in the Diocese and if you could help them or be part of their educational programs.
- Invite a local Indigenous speaker to address your next club, group or committee meeting on the issues facing Indigenous peoples today.
- Work with the local Aboriginal people to erect a plaque in your school or church grounds or on the entrance to the main building to recognise the traditional custodians of the land.
- Finally, walk with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the journey. Do not go ahead, or linger behind – we must be side by side.

Online Resources

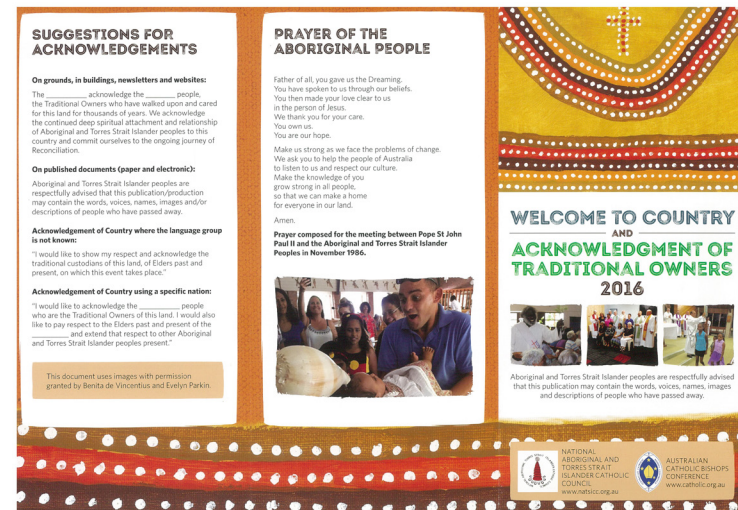
NATSICC Website
www.natsicc.org.au/saintJP2

2006 Social Justice Sunday Statement
 THE HEART OF OUR COUNTRY Dignity and justice for our Indigenous sisters and brothers
http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/files/SJSandresources/2006_SJS_Statement.pdf

John Paul II's Visit to Australia 1986 - Highlights
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nKuxfmqYlxc>

The Pope in Alice: 25 years on
<http://www.eurekastreet.com.au/article.aspx?aeid=29241#V8aCPph96Uk>

Saint John Paul II Resource - Archdiocese of Melbourne
http://www.resourcemelb.catholic.edu.au/_uploads/rspga/John_Paul_II_resource_final.pdf



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 with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
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