



# Because of her, we can!

2018 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday Resources  
1 July 2018



A3 Poster of Artwork by Richard Campbell included inside



**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.

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**Acknowledgements**

NATSICC offer thanks to the following people that have assisted in the preparation of this document: NATSICC Liturgy team, Br Lawrence Sweeper., Sr Carmel Pilcher and Michael Arthur



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

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## NATSICC Liturgy Team Welcome

Our Mothers, Sisters, Aunties, Grandmothers and Daughters have been, and continue to be the thread which holds our families together. They have fought for justice, reconciliation and social change. Our Mother Mary is another strong inspirational woman in our lives, teaching us to open our hearts to God.

Women form the backbone of communities across Australia. This is particularly true for Aboriginal and Islander Catholic Ministries. Women are at the forefront of these community driven organizations designed to meet the spiritual and physical needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics.

It is time for us to celebrate and embrace the role that women play in our Ministries, our Church and our families. This Resource kit which is produced to assist Schools, Parishes and communities to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday highlights the women in our Church and community by providing Liturgy resources, stories of faith, prayer suggestions and youth activities.



## About the 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.

### 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.

Appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander symbols may be used a prominent place during the Mass to reflect the enduring presence of Australia's first people in the Church. The opportunity exists for these Parishes to reach out to the local Aboriginal and Islander Catholic Ministry to participate in the planning of the Mass and the celebration.

A specific set of Liturgical suggestions have been included to help Parish and Schools with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people present to celebrate this special day.

## Reflection by Erica Bernard

Broome resident Erica Bernard sees a lot of similarities in her Catholic faith and her Yawuru/Gidja spirituality. Erica is the Community Liaison Officer for the Broome Catholic Education Office and below she shares how Our Lady is reflected in the many strong women in her life.

### BECAUSE OF YOU MY FAITH IS STRONG

'Because of Her, we can' is this year's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday theme. So, I find myself reflecting on what that means to me, as an Aboriginal Catholic woman. While sitting at the grotto of Our Lady Queen of Peace Cathedral in Broome with my Mimi Cissy, (my grandfather's sister) I asked her what should I write, she sat there for a moment and said well it should all start with her, pointing to Our Lady. On this day, we were getting ready to pray to her for the loss of a family member and as always in my home town of Broome every family gather to say the rosary when someone dies, for an anniversary or when someone needs our prayers. This led me to see how Our Lady is reflected in my mothers, grandmothers, aunts, sisters, cousins, daughters and nieces, all the woman in my life.

It brings to mind the Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the announcement by the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary that she would conceive a son through the power of the Holy Spirit and he shall be called Jesus Christ (Luke 1:26-38). For her to

bear a child that will grow into a man that will die for me. Which brings to mind a story I have heard a few times about a group of women in a remote community wanting a statue of Our Lady and coming to the consensus that they choose the Pieta, Michelangelo's statue of the Blessed Mother with the broken body of her son which lay across her lap, nursed in her arms. The amount of tragic circumstances that many of our mothers/ grandmothers go through in losing a child is so evident in my family and communities on a daily basis, but as I look at my mothers, aunts, grandmothers and wonder what is it that holds them together, I see their devotion of love and prayer to Our Lady and to her son Jesus, and through prayer is where they connect and get their strength to keep going, keep living.

For every day that I will rise I'll pray that the Lord will grace me with his presence to do God's will, to set an example through my actions in what I do and all that I am for my children and my people. And that 'Because of her...' Mary Our Mother, I know 'I can...'



# Welcome to Country and Acknowledgment of Country Ceremonies

An Acknowledgement of Country is a ceremony that pays respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners 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 owners 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 Acknowledgements or Welcome to Country have become more common place since the creation of Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs), 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 Owners of the land on which the Parish stands in a physical form (signage, plaque) on Parish grounds
- Provide an Acknowledgement to the Traditional Owners 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.

# Suggestions for Acknowledgements

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

The \_\_\_\_\_ Catholic Parish acknowledge the \_\_\_\_\_ people, the Traditional Owners 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):

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

## Acknowledgement of Country where the language group is not known:

I would like to show my respect and acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, of Elders past and present, on which this event takes place.

## Acknowledgement of Country using a specific nation:

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



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)

- Acknowledgement plaques have been endorsed by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference for use in Catholic Parishes, Schools and organisations.
- Made from a UV resistant aluminium substrate, the plaques measure 297mm x 210mm and can be placed either inside or outside.
- Bulk orders with you own logo are available upon negotiation.
- Visit the online store @ [natsicc.org.au](http://natsicc.org.au) to order your plaque.



Artwork by Richard Campbell

## Because of her, we can!

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday 1 July 2018  
for Youth Activities and online resources, visit [www.natsicc.org.au](http://www.natsicc.org.au)

# Coronation of Mary

Our theme for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday is Because of her, we can. The 'her' is a reference to strong women in our lives - our mothers, daughters, aunties, grandmothers, sisters - and also to Mary, Mother of God. In the story below, NATSICC Torres Strait Islander Councillor Dolly McGaughey shares her story of growing up on Hammond Island and celebrating the Coronation of Mary - Torres Strait Islands way!

Growing up on Kirriri (Hammond Island) in the 1950s was very different from my birth place Poruma (Coconut Island) where I was baptised into the Church of England, now known as the Anglican Church.

I moved with my parents to Kirriri which was a Catholic Mission, here I attended St. Joseph's School. Back then the Catholic School was very different to what it is today. With a resident Priest and Nuns teaching at the School, we were taught hymns and prayers in Latin. The celebration of the Eucharist and the Benediction was all in Latin, plus other festivals like Easter and Christmas.

We soon became accustomed to the many church rituals. We also celebrated Saint's Feast Days of St. Patrick's and St. Joseph's.

One of the many celebrations that sticks in my mind was and still is the Coronation of Mary - best known to us as Crowning of Our Lady. This usually happens on the last Saturday of the month of May. It was an exciting time for the children. There were a few chores to be done prior to the Crowning. At school three girls were chosen, one to carry the crown, one to carry the bouquet and one to crown Our Lady.



Hymn practice was held at the church during school hours, later we would practice how to walk into the church, who would stand where, what to do and when. The statue of Mary is beautifully decorated and we had to use a step ladder to place the crown upon Mary's head.

On weekends, parents and children would go bush (orchid hunting) to collect orchids for the Crowning. I guess I would say that Cooktown orchids and 'Curly Brown orchids' grew abundantly on Kirriri and they were used to decorate the backdrop of Our Lady. They bloom in May which was perfect timing for the Crowning. We would pick stems with flowers that were blooming, and also ferns and other greens to make bouquets for every single child at school.

As far back as I can remember, we have always used the same hymns and prayers for the Crowning. Girls in white dresses, veils and shoes; and boys in white shirts, shorts, shoes and gold sash.

Today Kirriri's population is smaller. The Crowning continues to be held every year and is still considered important, although less children are attending compared to the 1950s. The event is well celebrated and always brings joy to the children, parents and community. I've always wondered where else in the world this celebration is taking place.

# Liturgical Suggestions

This year NATSICC is offering two sets of liturgical resources. One for parish worshipping communities and another for assemblies where the majority of worshippers are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders.

The following ceremonies 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.

Please follow the suggestions given. 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.

## HYMNS

Entrance Hymn:  
Holy God we Praise thy name (AOV2 129; CWBII 504)

Offertory:  
I have seen the Lord (AOV 98)  
The Cry of the Poor (AOV 83, CWBII 618)

Communion:  
We Remember (AOV 81)  
Like a Shepherd (AOV 160; CWBII 538)

Recessional:  
All the ends of the Earth (AOV 76)

## Readings

### FIRST READING

Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24 It was the devil's envy that brought death into the world.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 29:2, 4-6, 11-13.R v.2

### SECOND READING

St Paul to the Corinthians 8.7 9 1315  
Your abundance should supply their want.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION cf. 2 Tim 1:10

Alleluia, alleluia!  
Our Saviour Jesus Christ has done away with death and brought us life through his gospel. Alleluia!

GOSPEL  
Mark 5:21-43 Young girl, I say to you, arise.

### PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

#### INTRODUCTION (Celebrant)

**Reader:**  
We pray for Pope Francis, all Bishops, Clergy, Religious and Deacons : that they will be guided by the Holy Spirit when making decisions that are inclusive of all. Let us pray to the Lord.  
**R. Lord hear our Prayer.**

**Reader:**  
We pray for the disadvantaged, vulnerable, homeless and outcasts who are experiencing pain and suffering: that they may be treated with dignity and respect. Let us pray to the Lord.  
**R. Lord hear our Prayer.**

**Reader:**  
We pray for all young people: that they be guided by the Holy Spirit and find the love that the Lord has for them. Let us pray to the Lord.  
**R. Lord hear our Prayer.**

**Reader:**  
We pray for all in our communities who are sick and dying, especially those without anyone to care for them: that Mary, the Mother of Sorrows, will help us to be brothers and sisters to those who suffer. Let us pray to the Lord.  
**R. Lord hear our Prayer.**

**Reader:**  
We pray for a spirit of reconciliation in Australia: that all who live and work together will share this blessed land with their brothers and sisters. Let us pray to the Lord.  
**R. Lord hear our Prayer.**

**Reader:**  
We pray, in communion with the Mother of God, for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples: that they will be healed of all injustices and look forward to the future with hope in the Risen Lord. Let us pray to the Lord.  
**R. Lord hear our Prayer.**

**Reader:**  
We pray in union with St Mary of the Cross MacKillop: that we will follow her bold example of living the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Let us pray to the Lord.

**R. Lord hear our Prayer.**

**CONCLUSION (Celebrant)**  
**Gracious and loving God, we ask you to hear our prayers through Jesus Christ. Amen.**

## LITURGICAL RESOURCES FOR MASS WHERE MOST OF THE WORSHIPPING ASSEMBLY ARE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS

We acknowledge that God has been walking with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, 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 know 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 culture can be included in the church's liturgy – especially when Aboriginal people are members of the celebrating assembly. Please follow the suggestions given, and NATSICC strongly advise that you work closely with your Parish Priest and Liturgical team to ensure the suggestions conform with the Liturgical norms of the Roman Missal.

### INTRODUCTION

Welcome/acknowledgement of country might include:

Today, on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday we celebrate the contributions that we Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters, and all who have gone before us, gift to our Australian Catholic Church. Our culture, spirituality and commitment to Jesus Christ is a shining example of God's love and wonder.

### 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 with Water to Aboriginal 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.*

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 BEFOREHAND, OR PRAYED DURING THE MASS SPONTANEOUSLY.  
\* Alternatively, see previous page for suggestions.

### 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, Indigenous 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

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYERS FOR MASSES WITH CHILDREN, MASSES FOR RECONCILIATION, OR ONE OF THE EUCCHARISTIC PRAYERS FOR SPECIAL USES AND OCCASIONS MIGHT BE

### ABORIGINAL OUR FATHER

*Please contact the Broome Diocese for permission to use this prayer*

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.  
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

### LANGUAGE

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 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.

### 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 as long as 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.

- Didge and clapsticks can accompany the choir.
- Didge 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.

## NON ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PARISH CONGREGATIONS

There are over 120,000 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 remember Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in your thoughts and prayers on this day.

### 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 people, 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.

### INTRODUCTION

Today is the 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time and the day that the Australian Bishops have invited us to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday. 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. In particular we praise God for the people who nurtured the land here in our parish that we call home.

### RITE FOR BLESSING AND SPRINKLING OF WATER MAY BE USED IN PLACE OF THE PENITENTIAL RITE ON THIS DAY (APPENDIX 2 ROMAN MISSAL)

### VESSEL USED TO CARRY THE WATER MIGHT BE A COOLAMON SUGGESTED INTRODUCTION TO THE RITE

**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.

### GIFTS PROCESSION

BESIDES BREAD AND WATER FOR THE EUCHARIST, GIFTS OF FOOD OR A SPECIAL COLLECTION COULD BE BROUGHT FORWARD FOR USE BY NEEDY ABORIGINAL PEOPLE. 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.

### EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

Eucharistic Prayer for Reconciliation II

If some Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people are present at the parish Eucharist other cultural elements could be included.

### MUSIC

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

### 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*

#### ABORIGINAL THANKSGIVING PRAYER

God of Holy Dreaming, Great Creator Spirit, from the dawn of creation you have given your children the good things of Mother Earth. You spoke and the gum tree grew. In the vast desert and the dense forest, and in the cities and at the water's edge creation sings your praise. Your presence endures at the rock at the heart of our Land. When Jesus hung on the tree you heard the cries of all your people and became one with your wounded ones: the convicts, the hunted, the dispossessed. The sunrise of your Son coloured the earth anew, and bathed it in glorious

hope. In Jesus we have been reconciled to you, to each other and to your whole creation. Lead us on, Great Spirit, as we gather from the four corners of the earth; enable us to walk together in trust from the hurt and shame of the past into the full day which has dawned in Jesus Christ. Amen.

*[Permission to use this prayer was given by Lenore Parker.]*

#### JUBILEE PRAYER

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 of the emus fighting And the kangaroos picking up 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)*

#### 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*



# Homily notes

As you reflect upon and pray with the liturgical readings for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday—with its theme *Because of Her, We Can*—you might focus on three aspects of the gospel passage: (a) women as the major characters in the two healing stories; (b) the significance of faith for these healings; and (c) Jesus' healing power transforming a broken world. At the conclusion of this reflection, I will propose a connection with Mary's place in the history of our salvation.

Both Jairus's daughter and the woman with the flow of blood find themselves at the edge of Israel's communal and religious life. The twelve year old is reported to be dead, and the woman is utterly marginalized. She has suffered from uncontrolled menstrual bleeding for twelve years, which renders her constantly ritually impure. She is unable to play an active part in the community of Israel. Her ailment, therefore, is far more than a medical problem; it banishes her to the margins of the communal and religious life of Israel.

In both of these healings, Jesus responds to faith. The woman's faith was aroused when she heard about Jesus, and she knew that touching his cloak would be enough. It was, Jesus sensed that God had acted through him, and told the woman that her faith in what God could do through him had made her whole. In the other healing story, Jesus responds to the faith of the synagogue official Jairus. Jesus insists that faith must replace fear, he takes the girl by the hand, and she is healed.

The healing miracles are a central part of Jesus' ministry and are only understood in relationship with him, through faith. He rejects the idea of self-authenticating or spectacular miracles; he rejects acts which might simply draw attention to himself. Rather, Jesus' healings express God's desire to liberate women and men from suffering. The reign of God is coming about through his healings. They are a liberation not just from disease, but from social, personal, and religious alienation.

Toward the end of her beautiful book about Mary the mother of Jesus, *Truly Our Sister*, New York-based theologian Elizabeth Johnson reflects on the Magnificat (Luke 1:39-56), Mary's song praising God for the gift of a child. She praises God for overcoming the oppression of a broken world—exalting the lowly and sending the hungry away with good things. Johnson sums up the meaning of the Magnificat in these words: "Mary sings pregnant with hope, bearing the Messiah, embodying the historic reversal she proclaims. Who shall mother the Messiah? Not a well-protected queen, not someone blessed with a bounteous table and a peaceful life, not a well-regarded woman of influence. Indeed, there is nothing wrong with these things; peace and abundant nourishment are among the blessings hoped for in the messianic age. But the world is distorted by sin. People accumulate power and wealth at the expense of others. Suffering is rampant. And the pattern persists through the generations. Into this unjust situation comes the choice of God, Creator and Redeemer of the world. Hearing the cries of the oppressed,

seeing their misery, knowing well what they are suffering, coming down to redeem, the Holy One aims to turn the unjust order of things upside down and make the world right again, being faithful to the covenant promise. In the deepest revelatory insights of Jewish and Christian traditions, there is no other God." [Johnson, *Truly Our Sister*, 270-71.]

In light of the readings for National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday, and in the lead-up to the Plenary Council in 2020, we must, as a Catholic community, attend to the Spirit of God at work among us, and to the healing that the Spirit seeks to bring. One dimension of this healing concerns an adequate response to the needs of the whole Aboriginal community. Another concerns the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the constitution, and their having a far more significant voice in Australia's governance. A further dimension of healing suggested by the gospel passage is the need to develop a church life in which women's equal dignity is recognized.

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## Youth Activities

RESOURCE PACKAGE FOR SCHOOLS

NATSICC wishes to thank the Diocese of Wilcannia Forbes for compiling the activities below.

Several of the activities make reference to an online link, these items are available via: [www.natsicc.org.au/2018-youth-activities.html](http://www.natsicc.org.au/2018-youth-activities.html)

### 1. INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY: SET UP A PRAYER SPACE

- Display a range of Aboriginal spirituality resources along with a cross and candle.
- Allow students to create their own prayer space using these materials.
- See examples below



### 2. THE IMPORTANCE OF ART AND FAITH IN THE LIFE OF SHIRLEY PURDIE

Shirley Purdie Google slide (available at [www.natsicc.org.au/2018-youth-activities.html](http://www.natsicc.org.au/2018-youth-activities.html))

- Who is Shirley
- Interview with Shirley (youtube clip)
- Reflection questions & Art activity

### 3. DISPLAY THE CROSSES AT THE CHURCH ENTRANCE ON ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SUNDAY

- The crosses they make in the first activity could be used near the entrance to your local Parish Church welcoming people on Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Sunday.
- Students physically assist with staking the crosses into the ground, or alternatively placing them around the entrance to the Church, on the Friday prior.
- It can be a means of connecting local Aboriginal people to the Church.

#### 4. VIEW YOUTUBE CLIP BY BISHOP COLUMBA MACBETH GREEN FROM THE DIOCESE OF WILCANNIA-FORBES ([www.natsicc.org.au/2018-youth-activities.html](http://www.natsicc.org.au/2018-youth-activities.html))

- Because of her we can - Bishop Columba
- Bishop Columba addresses the theme of “Because of her, we can” with a focus on the important role of women in our lives, in traditional Aboriginal culture and links this to the Marian tradition.

#### 5. CREATE A MURAL FROM A LOCAL DREAMING STORY

- Invite a female Aboriginal relative/s of a family from the school to be involved. (Your Aboriginal Education Workers in your school may be able to assist)
- Share a local Dreaming story (could be any Dreaming story but for greater impact, localise it)
- Create a mural based on the Dreaming story.
- See example of St Patrick’s School, Brewarrina



- On completion record students explaining their understanding and involvement in the project.

#### 6. MARY OUR MOTHER

- Present the google slide, “Mary our Mother” which connects the ancient women of this land with Mary our Mother through the study of the artwork “Mimi Ngaire” by artist Richard Patrick Campbell.
- Click on the link “Kahoot - Mary” to test kids basic knowledge of Mary in a fun and interactive trivia style game.

#### UPPER PRIMARY / SECONDARY SCHOOL

##### 1. RESEARCH PROJECT - SIGNIFICANT ABORIGINAL WOMEN WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

- Present the powerpoint “20 inspiring Aboriginal women who have changed Australia” as a means of background support prior to the project. There are wondering questions at the end of the slide to reinforce and depth learning.
- Research significant Aboriginal women that have contributed to the mission of the Church eg. Miriam Rose, Mum Shirl. This can be compared to the work contributed by Mother Teresa and the pastoral role she embodied.
- Students create a presentation on their findings using any form they choose eg. Artistic, writing, technology.

##### 2. LITURGY OF THE WORD

School Liturgies are a great way for a class or two to explore worship outside of the Mass. The variety of participation is only limited by the organizer.

- Readings can be limited to a Gospel according to your chosen theme.
- Homily can be a shared discussion based on a brief commentary.
- Hymns/Music can relate to a theme – using the didge, clapsticks, recorded music, actions etc.
- Prayers of the faithful can be written by the students
- Signs and symbols can be used in enhance the setting – Aboriginal colours and artefacts, native plants. Drawings or paintings done by the children can be presented during the prayers of the faithful or shared homily.



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