



NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK 2020

ABSTRACT

A set of readings and resources for NRW 2020
prepared by Aboriginal Education Unit, St Oswald's
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Introduction:

The theme for this year's National Reconciliation Week is "In This Together". In some senses this theme has been "stolen" by the tagline for action against the Corona virus. It has become a catch-all of equality and unity in a fight against COVID-19. In this usage it suggests that we are all one and the same and are responsible for caring for each other at this time of national concern.

I would suggest this is not what is meant by the slogan as it was intended for NRW.

"Today we work together to further that national journey towards a fully reconciled country.

Reconciliation is a journey for all Australians – as individuals, families, communities, organisations and importantly as a nation. At the heart of this journey are relationships between the broader Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We strive towards a more just, equitable nation by championing unity and mutual respect as we come together and connect with one another.

*On this journey, Australians are all **In This Together**; every one of us has a role to play when it comes to reconciliation, and in playing our part we collectively build relationships and communities that value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories and cultures."*

The fact sheets about the 1967 referendum and the Mabo case remind us of the progress we have made (see References). The fact sheets included with the daily readings and dealing with various social justice issues reminds us that we still have much to do and that it is up to all of us to close the gap.

The purpose of this resource is to invite you and others to make this journey with us so that we all benefit from the success of this country.

About this Resource:

This resource is written for individuals who take their faith seriously and look for ways to integrate it with the social issues of the day. It is written for those who wish to consider how scripture informs our response to the social landscape and how that social landscape in return influences, impacts or changes our understanding of scripture. It is written as a means of engaging with both and discovering your truths and insights relevant to our need for reconciliation.

For each day of NRW there are:

- the lectionary texts for the day (you will need a Bible),
- a short reflection,
- a Fact Sheet regarding a social justice issue affecting Aboriginal people
- an Australian Eucharist with variations for mid-week and Sunday worship.¹

¹ This service is not approved for general use. Please consult with your Diocesan Bishop for clearance before use.

How to Use This Resource – A Suggestion.

1. Begin in prayer and stillness.
2. Read the texts.
3. What strikes you about these texts? Look for words, phrases or ideas that stand out for you.
4. Now, read it again and see what stands out for you in relation to National Reconciliation Week and its theme – “In This Together”. Again, look for words, phrases or ideas that stand out for you.
5. Next read the Fact Sheet noting the information that is new or that you had forgotten. At the same time be aware of the feelings and emotions the Fact Sheet gives rise to.
6. How can you bring together both set of the texts, so each illuminates the other and together they speak to you?
7. What are they asking of you, the church and society?
8. End in prayer and stillness.

An Australian Eucharist

**Service Prepared by Rev. Glenn Loughrey 2020
St Oswald's Anglican Church
Glen Iris**

Processional Hymn:

Acknowledgement of Country:

Today, as we gather to worship,
we acknowledge the Wurundjeri people,
who are and always will be,
the sovereign custodians of this place.

We acknowledge that through this land,
the First Peoples were nurtured and sustained
by the Spirit alive in this place,
and in a spirit of responsibility and reciprocity,
they cared for it.

**We honour them for their custodianship
of the land on which we gather today.**

We acknowledge that the First Peoples
already had a sophisticated understanding
of the Great Creator Spirit
before the arrival of the colonisers;
**this Spirit was already in the land,
revealing the Way to be on country
through law, language, custom and ceremony.**

We acknowledge that this understanding resembles
the love and grace
that was revealed in Jesus Christ,
and that it sustained the First Peoples
and gave them particular insights into God's ways:
**and so, we rejoice
in the hope of reconciliation
found in the good news about Jesus the Christ, our Elder.**

Acclamation:

Blessed be God, the Great Creator Being.

**Blessed be God, the Breath of All, the Wisdom behind the Dreaming and the Way
of Reconciliation and Healing.**

Call to Worship:

Our land is alive with the glory of God;
desert sands hum and gum trees dance.
Brown grasses sing
and mountains breathe their stillness.
All created things add their rhythms of delight
and even stones rap out their praise.
Let our voices mingle with those of the earth;
may our hearts join the beat of her joy,
for our triune God is with us:
the Source of all being surrounds and upholds us.
Christ Jesus walks beside and before us.
The Spirit moves within and between us.
Blessed be God, our wonder and delight.

Let us pray.

**Creator God,
You who know our secrets and walk in our hearts:
Remove the rubbish and the unseen
By the wisdom of your Dreaming
So we can live on country in kinship with you
And make you known to all,
Through Christ our elder. Amen**

Hymn of Praise

**Glory to God of Holy Dreaming,
and peace to God's mob on country.
Great Creator Spirit,
almighty and all loving,
we worship you; we give you thanks,
we praise you for your beauty.
Jesus Christ, only child of the Father,
Holy One, elder of God,
you take away the evil of the world:
be understanding of us;
you who are present near to God:
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Sacred One,
you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are above all things,
Jesus Christ,
with the Dreaming's Spirit,
in the beauty of God, the Father. Amen.**

Collect

**Great Creator Being,
As we come together to ponder our fractured past,
may we find the humility necessary
to recognise the violence and destruction, both given and received,**

and forgive each other through truth-telling and repentance
As we spend time in the present,
Help us to find ways to reconcile the past,
planting new tracks to a shared future,
learning to walk together in unity and hope.
Remind us we are in this together
and what diminishes either diminishes the whole.
In this we discover our Dreaming, the beginning and end of existence.
Amen

First Reading:

The Gospel:

Glory to you Jesus Christ

Hear the Gospel of our God,
Praise to you Jesus Christ.

Please sit

Sermon

Please stand

Affirmation of Faith

Let us together affirm the hope we share.

**We believe in God, creator and sustainer of life,
creator of the black woman and the white woman
of the black man and the white man
of the woman who is not quite black and not quite white
of the man who is not quite white and not quite black.**

**We believe in God, the Creator
who gave us the desert pea and the flowering gum,
the Murray cod and the platypus,
the Southern Cross and the Milky Way.
We believe in God,
who gave us a land to keep,
to reverence and to cultivate.**

**We believe in Jesus, born of a woman,
who was not quite black and not quite white,
a woman who was not quite sure of who she was or who she was to be,
a woman who faithfully struggled to believe.
We believe in Jesus – risen,
liberator of all humanity, Emmanuel, God-with-us, God-for-us.**

**We, women and men of the great South Land of the Holy Spirit,
believe in the power of the Spirit to set us free to regenerate our land,
to transform our world, to work for peace,
to listen to the loneliness of ‘the drover’s wife’ and the ‘weeping man.’
We believe in the power of the Spirit to transform our dealings with our
sisters and our brothers of other colours and diverse creeds.**

Prayers of the People

Let us pray for the world and for the Church.²

Creator, we long for wholeness in our church and our country.
For honest, open communications.
To say what we need to say, in safety and without fear.

Hear our Prayer, O God, and in your love, answer.

Creator, help us to stay close, to never let go of one another, in joy as well as in pain.
To embrace, to feel the physical presence of one another, and to be truly present, one to another.

Hear our Prayer, O God, and in your love, answer.

Creator, we need to feel connected to our families, and to the church family.
To learn and to grow. To be part of a web of relationships.
To pass on values, love and a sense of closeness.
To be part of an inner circle of safety.
To spiral out to an open circle that welcomes others in.

Hear our Prayer, O God, and in your love, answer.

Creator, we long for a gentle time of warmth and wholeness.
For time and energy to nourish relationships.
For honest sharing out of genuine love for all members of the church community.

Hear our Prayer, O God, and in your love, answer.

Creator, we long to dance.
To move into the centre of the circle.
To touch and grow together in community into completeness.

Hear our Prayer, O God, and in your love, answer. Amen

Silence

Almighty God, you have promised to hear our prayers.

² Litanies and Responsive Prayers Litany of Reconciliation by Aboriginal Peoples of Canada.

**Grant that what we have asked in faith
we may by your kindness receive,
through Jesus Christ our Elder and Lord. Amen.**

Lament and Confession

Jesus said: I came so that you may have life and have it abundantly.

Let us acknowledge our selfishness with honesty and humility.

silence

Relying on God's forgiveness, we pray:

Voice 1:

Merciful God,
we, the Second Peoples of this land,
acknowledge and lament
the injustice and abuse
that has so often marked
the treatment of the First Peoples of this land.

We acknowledge and lament
the way in which their land was taken from them
and their language, culture, law and spirituality
despised and suppressed.

We acknowledge and lament
the way in which the Christian church
was so often not only complicit in this process
but actively involved in it.

We acknowledge and lament
that in our own time,
the injustice and abuse have continued.
We have been indifferent
when we should have been outraged,
we have been apathetic
when we should have been active,
we have been silent
when we should have spoken out.

Voice 2:

Merciful God, we the First People of this Nation
Lament and acknowledge our deep experiences of the past
And the resentment and anger we harbour for those responsible

We acknowledge and lament that this anger and resentment

Has prevented us from returning to our full Aboriginality
And that we have taken on the role of victims more often than we needed to.

We acknowledge and lament that our outstretched hand from Uluru
Was rejected and not accepted as a symbol of hope for all Australians;
Yet we remain hopeful that both cultures will find ways to repent, forgive and absolve
Each other for our sins of the past.

Priest:

Liberating Jesus, hear our lament and by your Spirit,
bring healing, hope and transformation
to the lives of our First and Second Nations sisters and brothers
and our communities, we pray.

Together:

**Gracious God, hear our acknowledgements –
we have not loved you
with our whole heart,
nor have we loved each other
and other neighbours as ourselves.**

**God of mercy,
forgive us for our failures,
past and present and
give us the grace today to make a fresh start.**

Absolution:

This is the best of all:
When we are empty, God Fills us:
When we are disheartened, God is compassionate;
when we are wounded, God brings healing
when we confess our sin, God forgives.

In Christ, through Christ and because of Christ,
Our Elder and Redeemer
our sins are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

You refill the cup of life, O God.

In Christ, we find refuge, strength and hope.

Amen.

Please stand

The Greeting of Peace

We are the body of Christ.

His Spirit is with us.

The peace of the God be always with you.

And also with you.

Offertory Hymn

Offertory Prayer

Generous God of Holy Dreaming.

Through your goodness we have these gifts of bread and wine to share.

**Accept and use our offerings for your benefit
and for the fulfilment of your purposes.**

Wonderful be God for ever.

The Great Thanksgiving

God, you are with us.

We are never alone.

Our lives are open.

We know you are here.

And recognise you in all creation
and in each other

For this we are thankful.

God of Holy Dreaming,

Thank you for country, this country we share,

For the joy of being here today
and the possibilities of sharing in its wonders
with each other and our kin of all species;

For this

We thank you.

We recognise your patience

Remaining ready to welcome us back
after we missed the opportunity
to embrace each other;

We welcome your gift of Jesus,
your child, our elder, our Lord
Who lived for you so we too may live as one.

For this

We thank you.

Knowing blood does not cleanse us,
for there has been too much blood spilt on this land

We recognise his obedience to your tradition and language,
Which lead him to be unjustly crucified,
Opens the way for us to remain faithful to
Your way, the ways of our ancestors, your prophets and
Calls us to reconciliation in this land.

**For this
We thank you.**

We dance each day
In celebration of his return from the world of the dead
to you and to us;
celebrating in the new growth of hope and possibility in people of all ages,
cultures and origins
in those who were here first and those who came later,
in the grass and trees,
the eagle and the trout cod
goanna eggs and kangaroo pouches.

And so, with people of every nation, tribe and language, and with the whole Church
throughout the ages, we bring ourselves: all that we are, and all that we are not, joyfully
giving thanks and singing:

**Holy, holy, holy, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your
glory. Hosanna in the highest. [Blessed is he who comes in the name of our
God. Hosanna in the highest.]**

Glory to the God of Holy Dreaming, we honor you in whom our lives are founded, and in
whom our future together lies. We remember and honor our ancestors from all nations
searching that perceived your presence in life, and your meaning for all of life.

Above all we honor Jesus, our Christ, Elder and Lord, whose life and death and resurrection
shows us your complete nature and the possibilities for us.

We remember that, on the night before his death, Jesus, as he'd always done, gathered his
mob for a common meal. He took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread and gave
some to each one, saying: "Take, eat: This is my body, my country, given for you and for all
creation, take, eat and be restored."

After supper he took a cup of wine, and, when he had given thanks, he gave it to them and
said: "Drink this, all of you: This is my life given for you and for all creation, drink joyfully and
be renewed."

In light of this, we proclaim the mystery of our faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ's spirit renews our lives.

God of Holy Dreaming; may our hearts and minds be alive to what is sacred in these symbols
of bread and wine. May they open us to your guidance and to your love for us, for all
humankind, and for all life on this earth. This is our hope and shared desire, the expression
of our love and trust in each other and in Jesus, our Christ, our elder and Lord.

And now, in the spirit of Christ's teaching, we pray:

God of Holy Dreaming, honoured be your name.

*Let your Way be known, your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.*

*Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our self-centredness,
as we forgive those that act against us.*

*Save us in the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.*

*For the Way, the power, and the glory
are yours forever and ever. Amen.*

Christ has died and lives for all. (Breaks the bread)

These are God's gifts; take Jesus our Christ, Elder and Lord, into your hearts.

This bread: the body of Christ. This wine: the life of Christ.

(Offers communion to all)

Here is the place heaven and earth meet; here is the "everywhere, when" of our dreaming.

Communion of the People

Post Communion Thanksgiving

God of Holy Dreaming, we thank you for this simple community meal we share together on this day of mixed emotions; a meal that brings the spirit and reality of Christ into our hearts and brings us closer to you and closer to each other.

May our lives be lit up by your love, and may your love light up others through us.

Amen.

Hymn:

The Blessing

Life is short, and we do not have too much time to gladden the hearts of those who travel the way with us. So be swift to love and make haste to be kind, and the blessing of the one who made us and loves us and goes before us be upon you and all those whom you love, this day and always.....

in the name of the God of Holy Dreaming, and of Jesus Christ our elder and of the Creator Spirit. Amen.

Dismissal

Go, walk gently on country to love and serve our God

In the name of Christ. Amen

Wednesday 27th May

Acts 20:28-38

Psalms 68:28-35

John 17:11-19

Reflection:

This week is National Reconciliation Week, an opportunity to revisit the story of who we are and an invitation to reimagine our future together. In this 250th anniversary of Captain James Cook landing on our land, it is even more important we understand how we came to be where we are today.

This is not a neutral issue for the Christian Church in all its various forms and shapes. It is not something we as individual Christians can pass over as a secular or not a spiritual issue. It was and it remains entwined with our understanding of ourselves, our identity as both Christians and Australians.

It is an issue of truth. Truth is not debatable. What happened is not debateable. What we do about it depends on what we want the future to be. It is what we do in response to the truth that matters.

Australia was not discovered. Some of us are connected to people who were here at least 65,000 years before Captain Cook visited. Other Europeans and Asians had been here before him. He did not discover Australia, he claimed it for the Empire, and his actions set in place a chain of events that saw some 87% of Aboriginal people wiped out by war and disease in a little over 100 years.

The truth about the myth of 'discovery' is it surfaced in the church, in the interface between the western Church and imperial power. Celia Kemp in *"In a Voice in the Wilderness: Listening to the Statement from the Heart"* reminds us of the connection:

"Pope Alexander used the doctrine of discovery in 1493 to justify the Spanish conquest of the New World.

He issued a Papal Bull that said any lands not inhabited by Christians were available to be 'discovered', claimed and the rulership taken over in order that 'barbarous nations be overthrown and brought to the faith itself.'

The doctrine became the basis for Europe's claims in America, and the US Supreme Court used it to justify American Expansion into the West.

That is, Protestants used whether people were 'Christian' or not to decide whether they had a right to their land.

In Australia it appeared in the guise of 'terra nullius' – a Latin expression that means nobody's land.

This has been called 'a morphed and more extreme version of the doctrine of discovery'.

Jesus says: "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth." One could make a case for the importance of the truth of our beginning as a nation as a means of our own sanctification. There can be no integrity without encounter with truth. Until we are able to fully face and not only accept but own the mistruths about how we got to this place we can claim any form of righteousness nor integrity. It begins at the beginning, at that place where the original sin began, here in this country.

For Discussion:

Between the ship and the shore: The Captain James Cook I know Stan Grant³

I am reminded this week that we each have our Captain Cook, and how we see him tells us so much about how we see our country.

Black and white Australians enter this modern nation Australia differently. My ancestors stood on the shore and watched the ships come. Between the ship and the shore is two centuries of history; history still untold and justice still denied.

The descendants of those who came on the ships, even those who came in chains, reap the rewards of a nation that is among the richest, most democratic and diverse on earth. Two hundred and fifty years after Cook, the sons and daughters of those on the shore die 10 years younger than other Australians, and are the nation's most imprisoned and impoverished people.

My blood stood on that shore. My great-great-grandfather, Frank Foster, was a Dharawal man whose grandparents could have seen the white sails of the Endeavour coming through the heads of Gamay/Kamay (Botany Bay).

Frank was born to the huddled remnants of the First Peoples, crowded into the fetid boat sheds of Circular Quay. Frank and his sisters were rounded up and banished to a mission on the NSW-Victoria border. All to make room for the whites who had stolen their land.

It is hard to be Australian in weeks like this, when Australia remembers its glorious Captain Cook. We are told again that this was not an invasion. That Cook came with the best of intentions. There are those, who would portray Cook as a figure of derring-do. An enlightened servant of empire.

Writing in The Australian newspaper, journalist Trent Dalton, wrote of a "titan of exploration and achievement". Cook was "a man of breathtaking courage", who brought a new world of knowledge to "our shimmering shores".

³ <https://www.theage.com.au/national/between-the-ship-and-the-shore-the-captain-james-cook-i-know-20200427-p54ni3.html>

In the Herald, Peter FitzSimons portrays Cook as "a brilliant cartographer, navigator and seaman, who rose from extremely humble beginnings through hard work and technical excellence to be the foremost explorer of his age".

No argument from me. I can acknowledge that Cook. But I know another Cook.

FitzSimons' claim that Cook was far from "an enthusiastic imperialist" merely "an instrument of empire" is ludicrous. Cook was part of the Age of Discovery, when land not governed by a Christian monarch was deemed free for the taking.

Cook came here with secret instructions, orders of the crown to "make discovery" and "cultivate friendship and alliance" with the "natives". Cook was instructed to take possession of this land "with the consent of the natives". Before Cook had even stepped ashore he had shed Aboriginal blood. Is that how he sought consent?

FitzSimons writes, "before landing at Botany Bay he actually fired his musket and hit with lead-shot one of the warriors blocking his way". Blocking his way? These were sovereign people defending their country from an invader. As a writer of military history, FitzSimons surely would understand that.

FitzSimons says he was shocked to learn that Cook opened fire. He was shocked that Australians didn't know that. But Indigenous Australians knew. We carry the stories of people shot down, of frontier wars and segregation; of families separated. To FitzSimons, Cook becomes the prototypical Aussie good bloke. He writes: "Broadly though, he had great empathy for Indigenous populations, and worried about what contact with Europeans would do to them." Broadly? After shooting people? Cook didn't worry enough to not claim this country for Britain without our consent. That injustice stands. In the words of the Uluru Statement from the Heart it forms "the torment of our powerlessness".

Trent Dalton writes: "We don't have to heroise this man and we don't have to glorify him, but we should damn well remember him." Yes, and we should remember those on the shore that day too. We should remember the legacy he bequeathed us: a nation still caught between ship and shore.

So, here we are with our own versions of Cook. There is the space between us. I am not one to see history as a balance sheet: profit and loss. The grievance of history poisons the soul. It is our story: all of it. Cook is my story, the story of my ancestors is yours.

I have lived between the ship and shore, trying to navigate the brackish waters of our troubled past. Thankful for the remarkable achievements of our country, but knowing too that my people, my family, have paid a great price. My blood is drawn from black and white. From the ship and the shore. But at times I have felt as though I am in a battle with myself: an Australian for whom Australia is not meant to be. We need to find that better nation together. As we remember Cook, I remember too Eddie Mabo who fought all the way to the High Court to prove the land Cook claimed was his land. In 2001 UNESCO compiled the memory of the world. Australia's entries: the journal of Captain James Cook and the personal papers of Eddie Koiki Mabo. Australia's story. A story to remember.

Thursday 28th May

Psalm 16:1-6

John 17:20-26

Reflection.

Growing up in the country there were several things one had to do to be considered a part of society; play football, play cricket, drive a car, drink, have a girl/boyfriend and get married before 25! There were others but these were the primary ways people could use to see whether you conformed or not. Fitting in was all that mattered.

Some of us did, others didn't, some of us were black sheep and others simply wore white coats for the occasion!

Today's gospel reading is countercultural for modern society. Jesus challenges the concept of belonging and being with the idea that he and God are one and we are or can be one with both. Oneness challenges the modern idea of the autonomous self and conformity to society's conventions on the one hand and oneness or unity with God on the other.

Jesus completely ignores the individual as we know it – and directs his remarks to the communal – unity in community.

Conformity is different to unity.

We have all conformed, fitted into our surroundings, become a part of a group or a prevailing attitude just so we get along.

Psychologist Hosana Sadat defines social conformity "as a phenomenon that occurs when an individual's values, beliefs, behaviours, and attitude are influenced by either one person (minority influence), or by a group of people (majority influence) who establish norms. During conformity one changes the way they behave in response to social pressures. We have all encountered social conformity in life, whether it has been consciously or unconsciously, by accepting the dominant culture's expectation of us. What people say and how they behave are vastly influenced by others."

Unity speaks of integration, oneness and can, and usually does exist without conformity. Diversity is not the enemy of unity. Diversity adds the light and shade to oneness that is missing from conformity. Integration does not mean an absence of difference; it is the ties binding diversity together.

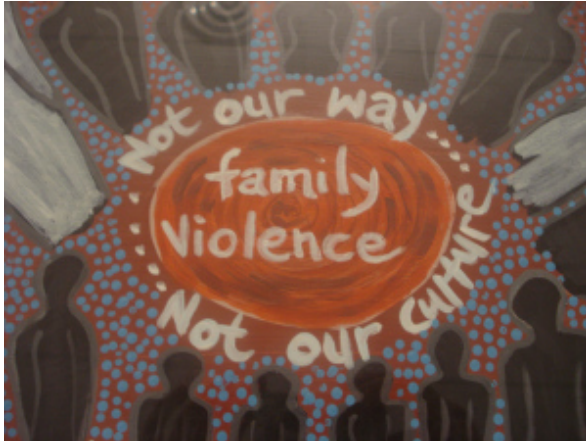
Duane Olson suggests, "Given the widespread recent interpretation of this passage, it is necessary to state at the outset that the unity of which Jesus speaks here is not organizational unity." This is not orthodoxy or the dumbing down of hard-won positions just to keep. Here we are speaking of essential unity, the unity found in relationship with the transcendent and lived out in relationship with others.

Jesus holds out the possibility of unity with God as normative. Just as he and God are different in their roles, they are one in their being.

What 'unifies' us? Love in its expanded form of the unfailing compassion or faithfulness of God to humanity. Our oneness is found in our desire to live out such a love in the world for the world and for the one who gives this capacity.

We are one because of whose we are and what we hold in common, faithfulness of God. We are to live out our unity in diversity in defiance of the pressure to conform to the world. Whatever our position maybe it finds its rationale in the compassionate love of God. It is the cornerstone uniting and compelling us to action.

FACT SHEET



Family Violence

(Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities)

- ⇒ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are 34 times more likely to end up hospitalised compared to non-Indigenous women.
- ⇒ Violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women is perpetrated by men of all cultural backgrounds, in many different contexts and settings across the country.
- ⇒ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are over 9 times more likely to be on care and protection orders than non-Indigenous children.
- ⇒ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are 10 times more likely to be in and out of home care than non-Indigenous children.
- ⇒ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women under report the extent of family violence due to specific and additional cultural barriers.
- ⇒ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are 5 times more likely to face homicide than other Australian women. 55% of homicides are related to family violence from the Indigenous community.

ISSUES THAT MAY CONTRIBUTE TO FAMILY VIOLENCE

- | | |
|--|---|
| ✓ High rates of imprisonment | ✓ Sexual jealousy and pornography |
| ✓ Poverty and financial problems | ✓ Previous European invasion left recurring dispossession |
| ✓ Unemployment and poor health | ✓ Violent family environment |
| ✓ Lack of education | ✓ Abusive styles of conflict resolution |
| ✓ Single-parent families and early parenting | ✓ Childhood experience of violence and abuse |
| ✓ Substance and drug abuse | |
| ✓ Poor or inadequate housing | |
| ✓ Social isolation | |
| ✓ Lack of access to services | |

Friday 29th May

Psalm 103:15-22

John 21:15-19

Reflection:

One has to feel for Peter in today's gospel reading.

Everything has fallen apart. No-thing remains as it was, and his life is all out of shape and there is no inkling it will improve.

The little aside John gives us, when Peter and the disciples recognise the presence of Jesus is very revealing; "When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea."

Peter was naked because he had been exposed by the events of the last week. All his talking big, super confidence and his knowledge of Jesus had been exposed by his failing to stand when it counted most.

Peter was exposed to those around him, leaving no doubt as to his ordinariness. He was no better or worse than those he was with.

In the encounter when Jesus asks him if he loves him, the final term for love Jesus uses is *philos*. Frank L. Crouch writes: "When Jesus himself clarifies the highest form of *agapē*, he does so in terms of *philos*. Love for friends is no second class love here."

Love of friends, the love remaining despite one failure after another, is the love Jesus calls Peter back to around a charcoal fire, just like the one around which he denied Jesus the third time. This is no deep and mystical spiritual love, just the love of one human being for another. A love without limits, without expectations, a love that simply asks to be replicated in our relationships with others. Peter was given no great mission. All he was asked to do was to love others in a way that would feed them in the midst of personal doubt, pain, oppression, doubt and fear.

"Our job is to love others without stopping to inquire whether or not they are worthy. That is not our business, and, in fact, it is nobody's business. What we are asked to do is to love, and this love itself will render both ourselves and our neighbours worthy." More from Merton: "The beginning of love is the will to let those we love be perfectly themselves, the resolution not to twist them to fit our own image. If in loving them we do not love what they are, but only their potential likeness to ourselves, then we do not love them: we only love the reflection of ourselves we find in them".

The conversation finishes, in between mouthfuls of fish, with the simple call to "Follow me".

FACT SHEET



Indigenous Australians' Health and Welfare

Significant improvements are continuing and emerging in the health and wellbeing of Indigenous Australians, but significant gaps remain between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. This disadvantage or "gap" starts from birth and continues throughout life.

- ✓ Burden of disease experienced by Indigenous Australians is 2.3 times the rate compared to non-Indigenous Australians
- ✓ 19% of the Indigenous disease burden was caused by mental health and substance use disorders
- ✓ 37% of the Indigenous disease burden could be prevented by reducing exposure to risk factors such as tobacco use, physical inactivity and poor diet
- ✓ Blindness and vision impairment are experienced by Indigenous Australians at 3 times the rate compared to non-Indigenous Australians.

The health and welfare of Indigenous is improving in some areas, including life expectancy, educational attainment and child mortality, but, Indigenous Australians still suffer from the consequences of colonisation and, as a group, continue to suffer widespread socio-economic disadvantage and health equality.

- ✓ 39% of the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians health outcomes can be explained by social determinants
- ✓ 64% of total burden of disease among Indigenous Australians is due to chronic diseases
- ✓ Indigenous Australians were twice as likely as non-Indigenous Australians to have severe or profound disability.
- ✓ The majority of Indigenous children in their first year of full-time schooling were developmentally on track.

Saturday 30th

Psalm 104:26-32.

John 7:37-39

Reflection

Pentecost is the day we celebrate the giving of the Spirit. This is a day of great celebration and unnerving responsibility. It is both a blessing and a challenge, a day in which we move out of the shadow of the incarnate Christ in the shape of Jesus and are left alone with the Spirit to usher in the kingdom of God.

John editorialises Jesus's proclamation with the words "Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive." Jesus is offering himself as the source of the water of continuing life and which will only happen when the Spirit comes.

John's Jesus says, "'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.'" The effect of such a gift is an outflowing of the Spirit in the form of love, respect and wholeness by those who claim Christ as their own. Jesus says this flow will be life giving, life-enhancing, life-watering. We cannot live without water and we can not live into Christ without the Spirit.

Let us take a little time to imagine a world, a country, a church, in which such a spirit was freely flowing from all who believed.

We also know that Pentecost did not result in a problem free church or world. The book of Acts is full of conflict and the history of the institutional church is replete with scapegoating, inquisition and violence.

Jesus is definite, that is not the way it is to be. He says clearly, "'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.'" Shall flow not may flow, on a good day will flow, when they have had a good night's sleep or any other rider. It is "shall flow"

Are we awake to our own frailties and foibles and our biases to stymie the flow from ourselves to others? Are we able to take our elves out onto the front veranda and have a full and open conversation with ourselves about how we speak to others, how we demand our own, how we hold onto what we have and have come to value?

Self-reflection is vital to reconciliation. Without the capacity to look closely at our motivations and the impact of our words and actions, we will continue to wreak havoc on others.

The coming of the Spirit is a gift that we can only receive if we allow it flow freely through us and to do that we have to get out of the way. We are to take ourselves to task and be prepared to step away from long held prejudices, understandings, practices and opinions and make room for compassion, inclusion, welcome, mystery and not knowing if we are to be source of living water.

FACT SHEET

Methods to Reduce Family Violence (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities)

TRUST is a vital foundation, essential to overcome fears of reporting violence,
Fear of child removal and fear of racism.

Case studies from the Northern Territory show common elements that contribute towards successful outcomes, which contain the following:

- ❖ **Allowing communities to generate programs.** The most successful programs are those developed by and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- ❖ **Engage the community.** It is crucial to consult the community throughout the program's development, especially when the initiatives come from the government.
- ❖ **Empower the community.** For communities to own family violence initiatives they need to be involved and supported, e.g. men's group which help build leadership and spread anti-violence messages.
- ❖ **Form Partnerships.** Many of the successful case studies involved partnerships with both government and non-government agencies.
- ❖ **Take a holistic approach.** Initiatives need to address all aspects of violence, including what makes people become violent.
- ❖ **Connect to culture.** Respect for traditional law reinforces anti-violence messages and builds positive community identity.
- ❖ **Involve men.** Men need to be part of the solution rather than alienated from participating in reducing violence towards women and children.
- ❖ **Empower women.** Through the promotion of women's traditional culture and authority.
- ❖ **Build on community strengths.** Programs have a greater chance of success when they build on the resources, networks or knowledge already present in communities.
- ❖ **Employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.** The expertise of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff makes a crucial difference in successful services.

Acts 2:1-21

1 Corinthians 12:1-13

John 20:19-21

Reflection:

Today's Gospel recounts the story of Thomas, known popularly, although not accurately, as Doubting Thomas. Whatever the origins of this story, it is both a challenging and hopeful story, one which asks some important questions and leaves the door chocked open by the naked doubt of Thomas.

Michael Palmer suggests, "The rise of Donald Trump in American politics speaks to the depth and influential nature of our national and international fear. We're a people afraid, and that fear has trapped us. Like the disciples in those early moments after Jesus' death, we've locked ourselves in an upper room, waiting for the other shoe to drop."

Like the disciples who locked themselves away in fear of reprisals and the unwanted knock on the door, western society is in the midst of a similar phenomenon. Fear of others and doubts about our place in the world is indeed trapping us and keeping us reticent and impotent. How do we react in a world gone mad? Do we lock ourselves away and become a hidden sect, secretive but safe?

In some sense that is what the disciples were doing. They were going for safety first. They had seen Jesus, but he had (apparently) to walk through a locked door. When he left the door remained locked.

Thomas wasn't in the room with them. He hadn't gone for the safety in numbers or in hiding idea. We don't know where he was, but he may have been back home, thinking about what had happened and getting on with life.

When told about Jesus being 'alive' he responded in a pragmatic and logical manner. There had been many stories and rumours going around. For Thomas, perhaps, there was just too much variation in the story, too much to be asked to believe without any evidence.

It wasn't doubt in the sense he dismissed it out of hand, but a doubt needing experience to substantiate and verify.

Nancy Rockwell writes "Thomas is a Greek name, and it means twin, though his twin, if he had one, never appears, and some suggest we are, each of us, his twin."

An interesting thought but one worth pondering in a number of ways:

How is what we believe influenced by our experience?

People often say I don't believe in God. I ask them to draw me a picture of the God they don't believe in. Without question they draw a God I don't believe in but when we start to discuss that drawing we uncover experiences that have given birth to such an understanding – Sunday School teaching, the disconnect between what a significant other has said they believed and what they did, treatment at the hands of religious people, violence in the world or the death of innocents – have all come together to give birth to the God they draw.

People of faith, you and I, are no different. We say we believe in an unadulterated form and think we have it correct but what we now believe is the product of our life experiences as well as the religious teaching we have received in whatever form that comes.

Faith is verified by its actions.

Thomas was no denier of the faith, simply one who had to experience it for himself.

Today, we are asked to live with what we don't know and what seems beyond us, our doubts and to reflect on experiences, allowing them to lead us deep into the mystery of faith.

Monday 1st June

Psalm 91:9-16

Mark 12:1-12

Reflection:

Reading this passage post-colonially is important.

For Aboriginal people, we have been to the tenants many times seeking what is ours, including a joint process towards sovereignty and treaty. Each time we have found ourselves with less, often much less than we both offered and sought.

In the beginning the welcome of hospitality was rebuffed with violence and genocide. More recently, each new statement of hope from Aboriginal people has been rolled up and put away without the respect and appropriate attention. A little piece of us has died each time.

We no longer have our languages, our lands, cultures and law. We no longer have sovereignty and our place as the First Peoples appropriately recognised. We remain as the exotic outsider not as equals. Our voice is sought on matters relevant to the dominant culture but not on matters vital to us and our flourishing. We are not seen or heard.

This is an important factor in the alarming incarceration rates for Aboriginal people. Not existing in the eyes of others and being disconnected from that which holds the wisdom of your culture and identity leads to violence, both against society and against those close to you and to yourself. Anti-social behaviour in all guises is violence against the over-riding shame of not existing, of not being 'enough' to qualify as a human person.

Society will loudly refute it has a role in this and points to the victim as the perpetrator of their own demise. Like the tenants in our story they can only gain by violently destroying the other and the ability not to see is the greatest violence.

Yet those who are not seen are the cornerstones for the rebuilding of our country and the developing of a more humane, inclusive society. It is they who know the truth of who we are and hold up a mirror reflecting, not the ideas we hold of ourselves, but the reality non-photoshopped as our judgement.

At one level, the crucifixion of Jesus achieved that in the first instance, and if we are aware, continues to do so today.

FACT SHEET

Indigenous Australians in Jail



- Since 2008, the number of Indigenous Australians has risen to 45% over the past ten years compared to non-Indigenous Australians.
- While Aboriginals only make up 2% of the country's population, the adult prison population is 28%.
- Indigenous men are 15 times more likely to be incarcerated than their non-Indigenous counterparts.
- Indigenous women are 21 times more likely to face jail compared to non-Indigenous women.
- The Indigenous youth population makes up 7%, but 54% across youth detention centres across the country. On average, this ranges from 15% in Victoria to 97% in the Northern Territory.

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS) and the Aboriginal Legal Service of Western Australia (ALSWA) identified the reasons for high imprisonment rates amongst Indigenous people:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ❖ Socio-economic disadvantage | ❖ Failure to recognise cultural differences and the existence of laws |
| ❖ Impact of colonisation and dispossession | ❖ Processes and practices within the justice system that discriminate |
| ❖ Stolen generations | ❖ Punitive bail conditions imposed by police |
| ❖ Intergenerational trauma | ❖ Inflexible and unreasonable exercises or prosecutorial decisions by police. |
| ❖ Substance abuse | |
| ❖ Homelessness and overcrowding | |
| ❖ Lack of education | |
| ❖ Physical and mental health issues | |

Tuesday 2nd June

Psalm 90:13-17

Mark 12:13-17

Reflection:

Here again a post-colonial reading is helpful.

For Aboriginal people, living in two worlds at the same time is the normal. We have, because of the invasion, to live seeing two ways.

When I grew up my house was only a few hundred metres from the top of the Great Dividing Range. Once on top of the range one became aware of a number of things. One was that when the rain fell water ran into different water systems depending on which side the mountain it ran down. It was either western water or eastern water. Its source was the same but where it went and where it ended up was very different. Living in that space meant learning to live looking both ways at the same time.

In our reading, they try and trap Jesus by getting to identify who is sovereign – God or the emperor. One can note the fact that they had a coin in their pocket in the synagogue saw them breaking their own laws, but we won't go there.

Jesus cleverly reminds them they live in two worlds at the same time. Give to God, God's and to Caesar, Caesar's. Learn to do this and to know the difference. Do not be fooled into placing one automatically above the other.

Education and wisdom are not mutually exclusively nor are they identical twins. Living in a modern world requires us to have both – an education to make our way economically and wisdom to understand what is and is not of value.

This is seeing two ways.

For Aboriginal people getting an education cannot replace the getting of wisdom from elders and country nor can getting wisdom replace the basic education one needs to flourish in modern society. Jesus calls us to be aware that we live in the world while carrying with in us the wisdom of another and that they do not automatically cancel each other out.

If we are to close the gap it needs to be closed both ways – Aboriginal and non-aboriginal people learning to see two ways. It is not simply the responsibility of Aboriginal people to be educated in the dominant culture's education but for the non-indigenous to be educated in aboriginal ways.

FACT SHEET

Office: 9885 0149

Indigenous People & Non-Tertiary Education

- › 60% of Aboriginal children are significantly behind non-Aboriginal children by the time they reach Year 1
- › 40% rise for an Aboriginal student's chance of employment when they complete Year 10 or 11. There is a further 13% increase if the student finishes Year 12
- › 36% of remote communities have access to a library
- › 10% of Aboriginal children who graduate Year 12



- › Literacy rates among Aboriginal students are lowest in remote communities
- › Reasons include low literacy of the parents and poor school attendance
- › Initiatives like the Accelerated Literacy Program try to bring literacy to a similar level to that of their non-Aboriginal peers.
- › The literacy rate gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students is "large and persistent" and varies greatly depending on remoteness
- › Year 5 Aboriginal students are still performing below non-Aboriginal Year 5 students, at 73.6% for Aboriginal students compared to 94.5% for their non-Aboriginal peers
- › When students reach Year 9, Aboriginal rates are only 5% higher than in Year 3.

27 May: a significant date

The 1967 referendum



On 27 May 1967, the Australian Government held a referendum. This was a momentous turning point in Australian history.

The 1967 referendum altered the Australian Constitution. More than 90 per cent of Australian voters chose 'Yes' to count Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the census and give the Australian Government the power to make laws for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

What was life like for the First Australians before 1967?

When the First Fleet arrived in January 1788, Great Britain took formal possession of Australia. It did so without negotiating with the original inhabitants, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who had inhabited the land for between 40,000 to 60,000 years. The British Government declared that the continent was *terra nullius* – empty land, or land that belongs to nobody.

The British settlement in Australia was not peaceful. Aboriginal people were moved off their traditional land and killed in battles or by hunting parties. European diseases such as measles and tuberculosis also killed many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

From 1829, Australia was considered part of Great Britain, which meant that all inhabitants—including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples—were regarded as British subjects.

On 1 January 1901, the Australian Constitution took effect and the Commonwealth of Australia was formed. Under the laws of the Australian Government, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were not included as citizens. Instead, in many cases they were treated as foreigners in their own land.

What rights did Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have before 1967?

Before 1967, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples did not have the same rights as other Australians under the Australian Constitution. Many aspects of their lives were controlled by the state governments, including the right to:

- vote in state elections
- marry whomever they chose
- move to wherever they chose
- own property wherever they chose
- be the legal guardian of their own children
- receive the same pay for the same work
- drink alcohol.

Because the state governments made these laws, if an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person lived in New South Wales, he or she had the right to do some of the things listed above. If the same person lived in Queensland, he or she had none of these rights.

While Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples had the right to vote before 1901, it was taken away or limited when the Australian Constitution was enacted. All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples finally gained the right to vote in:

- federal elections in 1962
- all state elections by 1965 (Queensland was the last state to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples the right to vote).

3 June: The Mabo decision

What is the decision?

The *Mabo* decision was a legal case held in 1992. It is short for *Mabo and others v Queensland (No 2) (1992)*. The legal decision was made by the High Court on 3 June 1992. The High Court is the highest court in Australia's judicial system.

The *Mabo* decision was named after Eddie Mabo, the man who challenged the Australian legal system and fought for recognition of the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional owners of their land.

Who is Eddie Mabo?

Eddie 'Koiki' Mabo was a Torres Strait Islander who believed Australian laws on land ownership were wrong and fought to change them. He was born in 1936 on Mer, which is also known as Murray Island, in the Torres Strait.

When he was growing up, life in the Torres Strait Islands was strictly regulated with laws made by the Queensland Government. In his heart, Eddie believed the land he lived on belonged to the Torres Strait Islander people who had lived there for thousands of years. But the Australian Government also believed that it owned the land.

In 1981, Eddie Mabo made a speech at James Cook University in Queensland, where he explained his people's beliefs about the ownership and inheritance of land on Mer. A lawyer heard the speech and asked Eddie if he would like to challenge the Australian Government in the court system, to decide who the true owner of land on Mer was—his people or the Australian Government. And this is exactly what Eddie Mabo did.

Why was the case so important?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples occupied Australia for 40,000 to 60,000 years before the British arrived in 1788. They spoke their own languages and had their own laws and customs. They also had a strong connection to 'country' – the Australian land.

When the British arrived, they declared that Australia was *terra nullius* (empty land – or land that belongs to nobody). As a result, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' occupation of and unique connection with the land were not recognised, and the British took the land without agreement or payment.

The Mer Islanders decided they would be the ones to challenge the legal principle of *terra nullius* in the High Court and that Eddie Mabo would be the one to lead that action.

What was the result?

The *Mabo* case ran for 10 years. On 3 June 1992, the High Court of Australia decided that *terra nullius* should not have been applied to Australia. This decision recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have rights to the land – rights that existed before the British arrived and can still exist today.

The *Mabo* decision was a turning point for the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rights, because it acknowledged their unique connection with the land. It also led to the Australian Parliament passing the *Native Title Act* in 1993.

Sadly, Eddie Mabo never found out the result of