

'HUMILITY THIS NATIONAL ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SUNDAY 2019'

15th Sunday Ordinary Time – 7 July 2019

PREPARING FOR TODAY'S FIRST READING

In approaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Spiritualities,
a sense of wonder and humility can be essential.

As we ponder today's 1st Reading from Isaiah,
the passage is written post exile.

There was the deep joy of the Jewish people who had survived captivity
and were able to return home.

Jerusalem was again the centre once more.

Imagine an Aboriginal community returning to their sacred land,
rejoicing in their identity, their oneness with mother earth.

Mother earth that nourishes and sustains them.

The features of the land with its Dreaming.

Faithfulness over 65,000 years,

their ancestors remembered in Song and Dance and Art.

To return to the centre of their spirituality.

Their name for God who created them.

Now let us read today's joyful First Reading from Isaiah with its beautiful images.

We read from the New Revised Standard Version.

ISAIAH 66:10-14

*'Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her,
all you who love her;
rejoice with her in joy,
all you who mourn over her—
that you may nurse and be satisfied
from her consoling breast;
that you may drink deeply with delight
from her glorious bosom.*

For thus says the Lord:

***I will extend prosperity to her like a river,
and the wealth of the nations like an overflowing stream;
and you shall nurse and be carried on her arm,
and dandled on her knees.
As a mother comforts her child,
so I will comfort you;
you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.***

*You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice;
your bodies shall flourish like the grass;
and it shall be known that the hand of the Lord is with his servants'*

Let us pause and read again the First Reading very slowly,
taking in the wonder, the joy, the love, the delight, the beauty.
And God comforting us: *'As a mother comforts her child'*.

[Pause]

175TH, 130TH & 30TH ANNIVERSARIES

This year of 2019 holds several special anniversaries.

It is the **175th anniversary** year of the first recorded Catholic baptisms
of Aboriginal people in Queensland in 1844.

Their names are remembered this morning at St Paul of the Cross Church
at Dunwich, on Minjerriba (North Stradbroke Island).

Their names are remembered again today at the beginning
of Eucharist at 12 noon at St Stephen's Cathedral in Brisbane.

It is the **150th anniversary** year of the statement by the Bishops on Aborigines in 1869.
We recall this statement on justice and compensation.

It is the **30th anniversary** year of the official opening in 1989 of [Ngutana- Lui](#),
the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Centre in Inala.
This Centre is a part of Brisbane Catholic Education and was part of the dreaming
of Catholic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and people
in south-east Queensland during the 1980s.

Reflecting on the 175th, the 150th and the 30th anniversaries,
we turn to today's *Second Reading from Galatians*.

We join with our Catholic and other Christian First Nations people
in the faith community today to ponder St Paul's message about the cross.
St Paul spoke to the Galatians.

GALATIANS 6:14-18

*'May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,
by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.
For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything;
but a new creation is everything! As for those who will follow this rule—
peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.
From now on, let no one make trouble for me;
for I carry the marks of Jesus branded on my body.
May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. Amen.'*

We listen to the pain and anguish in the Indigenous stories of life well over 200 years.

And we ponder how the world has been crucified to them, and they have been crucified to the world.

We repeat once more the words of St Paul:

*'the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,
by which the world has been crucified to me,
and I to the world.'*

In our parishes, we are invited humbly to listen to Christian Indigenous Elders as they share their love for Jesus and the stories of the Cross in their lives.

And we ponder how each of us *is crucified to the world, and the world to us.*

MISSION

Pope Francis constantly highlights our call to share in the mission of Jesus.

Our faith comes from the invitation of Jesus.

Jesus does not tell us to force our culture on others.

Each culture is invited to receive the Good News of Jesus.

Pope John Paul II highlighted this point with several addresses to Indigenous Peoples in his travels around the world as Pope.

And in his [Address in Alice Springs in 1986](#).

This followed on from the intervention of [Pope Paul VI in Sydney in 1970](#);

Since then we have been reminded of this at World Youth Day in Sydney.

And more recently during the June 24th, 2019 discussion at the Holy See between Pope Francis and the Australian Bishops.

And in this coming October in the Vatican will be the [Synod on the Amazon](#), with one of its foci on the Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon.

With this background, let us reflect on today's Gospel (the shorter version).

GOSPEL OF LUKE 10:1-9

*'After this the Lord appointed seventy others
and sent them on ahead of him in pairs
to every town and place where he himself intended to go.
He said to them,*

***'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few;
therefore ask the Lord of the harvest
to send out labourers into his harvest.***

*Go on your way.
See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves.
Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road.
Whatever house you enter, first say, "Peace to this house!"
And if anyone is there who shares in peace,
your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you.
Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide,
for the labourer deserves to be paid.
Do not move about from house to house.
Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you,
eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there,
and say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you." '*

This Sunday's Gospel has energy and action.
There is a plan.
There is a message.
There is the need to pray.
There is a cultural context and time in history.

HOW CAN WE ALL BE MORE INCLUSIVE IN OUR MISSION?

Part of our openness to the mission of Jesus will be a Reconciliation Action Plan.

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN (RAP) FOR THE ARCHDIOCESE OF BRISBANE

As an Archdiocese, recognizing the 175th anniversary this year, we await the return of a proposal to be more inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Cultures in our parish communities and Archdiocesan Agencies. After some years of consultation, our Brisbane Archdiocesan Reconciliation Action Plan, with the approval of our Archdiocesan leadership, has been forwarded to [Reconciliation Australia](#) for comment.

Words are never enough.
The Plan will include ways to implement the Plan.
There will be a new group to oversee the implementation.
There will be an Indigenous person employed part-time in the Archdiocese to help us with the implementation of the Reconciliation Action Plan.
And there will be an evaluation and review after a set period of time.

One test of our how inclusive we really are, will be the [Archdiocesan Assembly on the 4th-5th October](#).

There is a [Pastoral Letter from the Bishops](#) for this

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday 2019.

And over the weekend we have heard in the news media that a 6,600 year old aqua culture site in south west Victoria has been recognized by [UNESCO as a world heritage site](#).

The national theme for this Sunday comes from the Gospel:
'Peace to this house and all who dwell within.'

Our mission includes the wonderful message in today's Gospel
"The kingdom of God has come near to you."

We pray for the peace of Jesus to dwell within us,
as we look **humbly** for new ways of sharing the Good News,
and proclaiming the Kingdom of God.

We pray for the sense of wonder and humility in learning from other cultures.

Let us pray.

Fr. Gerry

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/070719.cfm>]



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