

THE PLENARY & FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES
13th SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME – 26 JUNE 2022



Before sunrise at Brighton (Warra), Queensland, 25 June 2022 | www.stjosephsbrackenridge.com
We acknowledge the Turrbal people, the traditional custodians on whose land we worship

THE RESPONSE OF JESUS

In exploring the response of Jesus and the early biblical church communities to racism, we could highlight the Christian responses to the Samaritan people, such as in the Gospels of Luke and John, and the Acts of the Apostles.

The *Parable of the Good Samaritan* in Luke's Gospel, and the encounter of Jesus with the Samaritan woman in John's Gospel, continue to challenge us as Christians.

From the Good Samaritan Parable, we learn that all people are our sisters and brothers. We are to love our neighbour. We are called to be compassionate and merciful to our neighbour.

Today's Gospel passage strongly reminds not to act in vengeance. With the journey of Jesus through a part of Samaria, we listen to the story.

GOSPEL OF LUKE 9:51-62

'When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him; but they did not receive him, because his face was set towards Jerusalem. When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, 'Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?' But he turned and rebuked them. Then they went on to another village.'

This was a major turning point in the mission of Jesus. Jesus turned toward Jerusalem and began his journey to his suffering, death and resurrection, his journey to saving us, to redeeming us.

There was an urgency for those Jesus invited, to follow him on the road to Jerusalem.

There is no place for revenge.

James and John had called for violent revenge against the Samaritan village.

Jesus rebuked both of them.

Some chapters later, Jesus deepens the understanding of the disciples by telling a parable of a good Samaritan who truly acts as a neighbour.

PLENARY

Continuing the June 2022 Sunday homilies before the Plenary early next month, we look at Part One of the Framework of Motions today. Let us now read from it.

“The Plenary Council joyfully receives the following recommendations of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council (NATSICC), which were submitted “in the hope that the Catholic Church in Australia will more resemble the Church that Jesus Christ wants her to be in relation to Australia’s First Peoples”:

- *Developing the cross-cultural competency of clergy, religious and lay workers in the Catholic Church to enable more effective and appropriate ministry with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.*

- *NATSICC calls upon the Catholic Church to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics to undertake formation training.*

Further, the Church is encouraged to ensure that existing retreats and courses are culturally appropriate.

- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander spirituality contains symbols and rituals that, when used appropriately in Catholic liturgical contexts, enrich our celebrations and facilitate a welcoming environment for Indigenous Peoples.*

- *NATSICC recommends that the traditional custodians of the land on which the Church, school, parish or organisation stands be acknowledged in a prominent and appropriate manner. Verbal acknowledgement prior to meetings and Mass is also encouraged.*

- *NATSICC calls upon the Catholic Church to unearth and discover the genius and gifts that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people possess through inclusion on committees, boards and decision-making bodies.”*

“THEREFORE, this Plenary Council:

a. says sorry to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in and beyond the Church for the part played by the Church in the harms they have suffered;

b. commits to continuing to work towards recognition and reconciliation;

c. joyfully receives and accepts the recommendations contained in the NATSICC position paper

“Embracing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the Life of the Catholic Church;” and d. endorses the Uluru Statement from the Heart.”

<https://www.natsicc.org.au/assets/eatsicc.pdf>

A BRIEF HISTORY OF NATSICC

In December 1970 **Pope Paul VI** visited Sydney. One of the outcomes was the need for the Australian Bishops to have a national consultative group of Catholic First Nations Peoples. Dialogue in 1972 and 1973 led to the birth of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council AICC.

A key moment was the 1973 Eucharistic Conference in Melbourne, with Catholic First Nations Peoples participating from many parts of Australia. And the early strength was with the Queensland AICC which kept the vision alive, and hosted annual conferences on important issues. The first AICC Conference was held at Yeppoon in Central Queensland 6th-11th January 1974. Eventually the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council, NATSICC, as we know it today, was established. Uncle David Miller is the Queensland delegate on NATSICC.

In November 1986, Pope John Paul II gave his famous address at the gathering in Alice Springs. He walked a dreaming track, meeting First Nations Peoples as he went. Aunty Rose Borey was the first to be presented to him on the track. Aunty Rose is a Quandamooka Elder.

Many years ago, NATSICC asked the Australian Bishops for National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday to be celebrated annually on the first Sunday of July, and the Bishops willingly supported this nationally.

AN EXAMPLE OF CLERICALISM

Next weekend is *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday*, with the second Plenary meeting that week. The Plenary speaks about overcoming clericalism in the church in Australia. Pope Francis continues to challenge the church today to overcome clericalism. An example of clericalism, would be if a parish priest decided that he wouldn't have National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday in his parish.

SAINT PAUL TO THE GALATIANS 5:1, 13-18

In today's Second reading of St Paul to the Galatian people, we proclaim and affirm Christ has set us free.

St Paul says:

*‘For freedom Christ has set us free.
Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.’*

This freedom must not be abused:

*'For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters;
only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence,
but through love become slaves to one another.'*

In fact, love is the core, the very essence of our freedom.

*'For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment,
'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'*

In a spirit of openness to the Spirit,
let us pray for the Plenary.

PLENARY PRAYER

Creating and Redeeming God,
beneath the Southern Cross and in its light
you have called together a people for Christ among the many peoples of this land;
you have made us new in the image of Jesus, your beloved Son,
and breathed into us the Spirit of sons and daughters of God.

Look on the face of your Church in Australia today:
see our brokenness and sorrow
for the crimes of abuse and hardness of heart
that have wounded so many individuals and families;
see our hope for the future and longing for your kingdom,
and give us new hearts – hearts of flesh not of stone –
that we might burn with your divine love for the world.

Teach us to read the sign of the times in the light of the Gospel,
with deep listening and patient discernment,
and send your Spirit to lead us into all truth,
that the journey of the Fifth Plenary Council may strengthen
the participation and communion of all members of the Church in this land,
and raise up a living witness to your presence among all peoples and through all
creation.

Mary, Mother of the Church and Help of Christians, pray for us.
St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, pray for us.

Father Gerry

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/062622.cfm>

More information on the Plenary Council is available at:

<https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au>