

NATSIEC PRAYER CALENDAR
APRIL 2006

Saturday 1 April

Readings: Jer 11:18-20, John 7:40-52

Pray for: Kowanyama Aboriginal Community (Gulf of Carpentaria), its peoples and needs

Reflection: *Kowanyama is Kokominjen for 'much water'.*

Holy Father –

With this water, cool our hands, our bodies from the heat of the sun.

Christ have mercy

With this water, kindly remove the heat of the heart.

Lord have mercy

With this water, soothe our injured feelings, remove the anger of yesterday.

Christ have mercy

Cleanse us from true and false accusation.

Lord have mercy

Clean the stains left by our own wrong doing.

Christ have mercy

Wash away the bloodstains of those who died unjustly.

Lord have mercy

Purify our hearts and minds.

Christ have mercy

Remove any trace of suspicion.

Lord have mercy

With this water, give us a fresh start to build a new community.

Christ have mercy

With this water, fill our hearts with a clean spirit.

Lord have mercy

With this water, prepare us to be reconciled to Yourself through Christ and through one another and to one another.

Amen.

(Blessing of the Water Prayer, Rite of reconciliation, South African Council of Churches 1996)

Sunday 2 April **5th Sunday in Lent**

Readings: Jer 31:31-34, Heb 5:5-14, John 12:20-33

Pray for: Pormpuraaw Aboriginal Community, its peoples and needs

Reflection: *Two groups of Aboriginal people live in Pormpuraaw: the Thaayorre people who are traditionally from Pormpuraaw and the areas to the east and south towards Kowanyama and including the Coleman River; and the Mungkan who are traditionally from the North including areas along the Edward and Holroyd Rivers. Established as an Anglican Mission in 1938, in 1987 the Community changed its name to Pormpuraaw, taken from the local dreamtime story about a burnt hut or Pormpur in the Kuuk Thaayorre language of the traditional owners.*

Monday 3 April

Readings: Susanna 41-62, John 12:20-33

Pray for: Gunggari Country, its peoples and needs

Reflection: Gunggari is the traditional language spoken in the Maranoa, Warrego, Condamine and Balonne regions of Western Queensland. In the Mitchell area, 80 kms west of Roma, children in the local schools are well used to lessons on Gunggari language and culture, including the imaginative development of a range of board games to give the young students opportunity to use their language. (see further Federation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages)

Tuesday 4 April **anniversary of the assassination in 1968 of Dr. Martin Luther King**

Readings: Num 21:4-9, John 8:21-30

Pray for: All leaders of oppressed peoples threatened by the loss of their life today, giving thanks for the vision, courage and example of Martin Luther King.

Reflection: *'A time comes when silence is betrayal. We must speak with all the humility that is appropriate to our limited vision, but we must speak. For we are deeply in need of a new way beyond the darkness that seems so close around us. I am convinced that if we are to get on the right side of the world revolution, we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values. We can no longer afford to worship the God of hate or bow before the altar of retaliation. The oceans of history are made turbulent by the ever-rising tides of hate. History is cluttered with the wreckage of nations and individuals that pursued this self-defeating path of hate. We still have a choice today: nonviolent coexistence or violent co-annihilation. If we do not act, we shall surely be dragged down the long, dark and shameful corridors of time reserved for those who possess power without compassion, might without morality, and strength without sight. Now let us rededicate ourselves in the long and bitter but beautiful struggle for a new world. If we will but make the right choice, we will be able to speed up the day, all over America and all over the world, when justice will roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream.'* (Martin Luther King, Jr. (Excerpts from a speech on the Vietnam War))

Wednesday 5 April

Readings: Dan 3:14-28, John 8:31-42

Pray for: Kaanju Country, its peoples and needs

Reflection: The homelands of the Kaanju people lie along the Wenlock, Pascoe, Archer and Lockhart River systems in Central Cape York in Queensland and are of great concern to the people. In the words of the Kaanju: *The Wenlock River has enormous cultural significance as the Creator of all of Kaanju homelands under the umbrella of Pianamu (Rainbow Serpent). The deterioration of the land is felt by Pianamu, and under Kaanju law if proper land management is not carried out Pianamu will not allow the land to be sustainable. Other important story places on Kaanju homelands include Malandaji (Thunder, Lightning, Coming of wet season), Chingka (Wild Cat), Umaachi (Black-Headed Water Python) and Nhanthanji (Sea Eagle). We are obliged under Kaanju law and custom to 'look after' our Ngaachi in a sustainable manner. In return our Stories, which are the land, will look after us physically, culturally and spiritually.*' (<http://www.kaanjungaachi.com.au/KaanjuNgaachiKaanjuPama>)

Thursday 6 April

Readings: Gen 17:3-9, John 8:51-59

Pray for: Aurunkun lands in Cape York, its peoples and needs

Reflection: *Wontulp is the Wik Munkan name for Mount White on Cape York Peninsula. In the traditional story of the Cape Keerweer people at Aayka and Aurukun, this mountain moved from Cape Keerweer to Coen. This reminds us of Jesus' words about the little faith we need to move mountains (Mt.17.20)*

Friday 7 April World Health Day – Make every mother and child count

Readings: Jer 20:10-13, John 10:31-42

Pray for: Mothers and children throughout the world; and especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers and children, for greater quality and quantity of support services, recognition, care understanding and empowerment.

Reflection:

'The world's health differs in the developed world and the developing world. In the developed world, nine of the ten leading causes of death are non-infectious. They include hypertension, heart disease, stroke and diabetes. In the developing world, lack of primary health care and the prevalence of infectious diseases creates a very different situation; some 1.8 billion people (about 30% of the world population) are infected with tuberculosis. It is estimated that by 2020, the three leading causes of the global disease burden will be heart disease, depression and road traffic accidents.'

(Dr Robert Kim-Farley's lecture Health for All: The Challenge of the New Millennium, Sydney 2001.)

Saturday 8 April

Readings: Ezek 37:21-28, John 11:45-57

Pray for: Alngith and Thaynakwith Country; for the Weipa Peninsula area and especially for the Naprunum community

Reflection: *'We might think that Aboriginal people are not listening. But in my ministry, as a teacher at Wontulp, I see great things happening, people coming to grips and working out their salvation, with trembling and fear, through their own way of seeing God and Jesus Christ, not letting missionary or their church work out their salvation. And these people are strong because they have found themselves, and they have got a place to stand.'* (Pastor George Rosendale, in *Indigenous Australia* eds. A.Pattel-Gray and J.Brown)

Sunday 9 April PALM SUNDAY

Readings: Isa 50:4-9a, Phil 2:5-11, Mk 14:1-15:27

Pray for: Our Christian communities as sisters and brothers together walk the way of the Cross in this Holy Week; for a joyful response to the heart of the Gospel and renewal in the power of the Resurrection.

Reflection: *Give incentive, not restriction, Give us Christ, not crucifixion.
Though baptised and blessed and Bibled, We are still tabooed and libelled.
You devout salvation sellers, make us neighbours, not fringe dwellers.*
(from 'Aboriginal Charter of Rights' by Oodergeroo Noonuccal)

Monday 10 April 3rd Sunday of Easter

Readings: Isa 42:1-9, Heb 9:11-15, John 12:1-11

Pray for: Those suffering from shame, rejection, or the oppression and violence of others and who are consequently painfully walking the way of the Cross this Holy Week

Reflection: *'Jesus' commandment to his followers was that they love one another as He had loved them...This love as well is in the shadow of the cross because Jesus went on in this text to say*

that “no one has greater love than this; to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” To love one another as Jesus has loved them was to lay down their life for each other. Christian love is more than an emotion or an attitude. It is more than a virtue or a commitment. It is more than a way of living. It is a way of dying because it is a gift which arises from our living in the Risen Lord who died and then rose from the dead. We, on the other hand, have been raised from the dead into his risen life and now can die for love of God and our brothers and sisters, as he did.’ ” (Bishop Michael Putney ‘In the Shadow of the Cross’, NCCA Forum 2004)

Tuesday 11 April

Readings: Isa 49:1-7, John 12:20-36

Pray for: the people and needs of the Marpuna (Mapoon) community; and all Indigenous people who have resisted and continue to resist the destruction of community

Reflection: *The return of Indigenous people after the shameful destruction of Marpuna in 1963 (to make way for mining) is a powerful symbol of resistance, and of hearts (rather than beds) burning with renewed hope for the future.*

Wednesday April 12 anniversary of the Starkist Cannery announcement

Readings: Isa 50:4-9a, Heb 12:1-3, John 13:21-32

Pray for: Lockhart River Aboriginal community, its peoples and needs; for those who campaign for the welfare of other living creatures; and for responsible action by business corporations

Reflection: *On this day in 1990, Starkist Cannery, a large USA based canning company, announced that it would cease to use tuna caught in dragnets, which also kill dolphins. Various environmental groups had been advocating this and later that day, two other companies later that day made similar announcements. The number of dolphins killed as a result of tuna fishing has fallen by 97% since 1990.*

Thursday 13 April MAUNDY THURSDAY

Readings: Exod 12:1-14, 1 Cor 11:23-26, John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Pray for: A deepened awareness of the unity of all in the love and mission of God.

Reflection: *‘Christ’s prayer was prayer of his heart. Our hearts have become one with Christ’s through our faith and baptism. We are constantly being transformed into Him. He is living in us and we in Him. We are being refashioned to become like him in every way. His thoughts become our thoughts. His mind our mind. His love takes over our weak efforts to love.*

If all this is true, then it is equally true that his prayer ought to take over our prayer...we need to let that prayer surface. We need to let it surface in the heart of every Christian so that there is a constant chorus ‘Father, may we be one so that the world will believe that it is you who sent him.’” (Bishop Michael Putney ‘In the Shadow of the Cross’, NCCA Forum 2004)

Friday April 14 GOOD FRIDAY

Readings: Isa 52:13-53:12, 1 Cor 1:18-31, John 18:1-19:42

Pray for: A refounding of our lives, communities and churches on the Cross of Christ and Jesus as our Great Defender

Reflection: *‘The illustration of the Maladigarra has helped Aboriginal people see Jesus as the Great Defender. A criminal sentenced to death has to stand before the tribal men to be speared. But the defendant obtains a Maladigarra, a champion or trained deflector of spears. All that the Maladigarra uses is a woomera. He tells his client: “You watch me and my movements, and do everything I do. Don’t watch the spears.” He places himself in front of his client, woomera in hand. He deflects all the spears and breaks them. When all the spears are broken, his client is set free. This is a powerful illustration to help the Aboriginal know and realise what Jesus did for all people. He put his life at stake because of his love for all...For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that he might be the great Maladigarra for all people!’*

(Pastor George Rosendale Milbi Dabaar)

Saturday 15 April

Readings: Job 14:1-14, 1 Peter 4:1-11, Mtt 27:57-66

Pray for: Those in prison, caught up in the criminal justice system or perpetrators of crime: that they may hear the Gospel of repentance, forgiveness and new life.

Reflection: *‘Near Princess Charlotte Bay, the country is flat and very rainy during wet seasons...According to Aboriginal law, marriage is arranged by the elders and there are strict rules about whom one can marry. One clan broke the law by marrying anybody and by borrowing each other’s partners. For this their god Yirrbal was very angry with them, and decided to be rid of them.*

He sent rain and thunderstorms to drown them. Some of them escaped and made camp on a hill called Tableland, the only hill in the area. Others tried to get to the high mountains of Coen. One woman, who was the worst of the group, the chief of the prostitutes, also tried to escape; but Yirrambal saw her just as she was getting to the top of the mountain. He cursed her there and turned her into a huge rock.

To this day the rock stands, and to this day voices are heard there, crying, mourning, and groaning. People are warned not to go near the rock lest they be punished in the same way. The god formed an island nearby on which to live, having decided to isolate himself from the area.

In this myth, we discern the hill where it was that many were saved from eternal death; in the groaning how men live in sin all the time. On a hill with a cross, we can find peace, love, and forgiveness.’
(Pastor George Rosendale Milbi Dabaar)

Sunday 16 April EASTER SUNDAY

Readings: Isa 25:6-9, 1 Cor 15:1-11, Mk 16:1-8

Pray for: the truth and power of the Resurrection to touch the lives of those in fear and shame this day

Reflection: *‘Rebirth must always continue. It is essential to keep alive the truth and hope that was given to us, in order to keep the Dream alive and to enrich this nation to become the nation it was meant to be: Great South Land of the Holy Spirit and the True Spirit of the land. The True Spirit within all creation is continually being reborn.’* (E Pike Hope Built on the Dreaming 2004)

Monday 17 April

Readings: Acts 2:14,22-32 & Mtt 28:8-15

Pray for: Umagico Community, its peoples and needs

Reflection: *‘As our stories are beginning to be heard and the new green shoots of the burnt tree are slowly breaking through, there is also a deep and humble responsibility to be observed. WE have to be worthy keepers of our New Dreaming, just as our Ancestral Dream Keepers were strong and trustworthy in their belief that the true spirit of the land came from the Great Spirit of all creation’’* (E Pike Hope Built on the Dreaming 2004)

Tuesday 18 April World Heritage Day

Readings: Acts 2:36-41, John 20:11-18

Pray for: respect and re-connection of people with the land and traditional culture all across the world

Reflection: *Our environment includes not just the natural surroundings but also human-made ones. We can mark today by celebrating our own national environmental heritage and by marking it as a day of international solidarity.*

Wednesday 19 April

Readings: Acts 3:1-10, Lk 24:13-35

Pray for: Injinoo Community, its peoples and needs

‘In north Queensland, the story is told that the Rainbow Snake came from the north, in the story of the Injino people. They say he came from the islands to mainland. When he finished his work, he moved to the headwaters of the Jardine. There he remains watching and caring for the people of the land. The next tribe says he came from the north and so the story continues... So he was the one that moved about and made the rules. When you read this Bible you say “Hey wait a minute, that’s what this good book says”. It says that God spoke and it was done. It doesn’t say that God did it on his own, his word performed it. You will also find here that the spirit of God moved over the face of the earth, and that’s the sort of teaching Aborigines had, that this Spirit of God, in the stories of the rainbow snake moved upon this country.’ (Pastor George Rosendale ‘Aboriginal Theology, quoted in Milbi Dabaar)

Thursday 20 April

Readings: Acts 3:11-26, Lk 24:13-35

Pray for: the New Mapoon Aboriginal community, its peoples and needs

Reflection: *Creator Spirit, you created all things, seen and unseen,
Listen to our silent prayer as we stand here before You.
Our weary eyes look back over distant horizons,
Back to those days where our people walked.
The footprints of our ancestors are imprinted on the earth,
And their images are real to us.
We see our grandfathers,*

*standing tall and strong, warriors of long ago.
 We see our grandmothers, strong and hard working women.
 We hear them singing, we see them dancing,
 and our spirits move within us.
 They told of emus fighting,
 And the kangaroos picking up the scent of our hunters...
 The images fade away as we feel the hurt of our people.
 We can hear the cries of our grandmothers,
 As they cry for their children.
 Loving Creator,
 You can see as we stand here and feel this hurt.
 Let us walk with you, towards the dawning of a new nation.
 We thank you for our scared being. Amen.*

(A Dreaming Prayer, NATSICC Leadership Gathering 1995)

Friday 21 April

Readings: Acts 4:1-12, John 21:1-14

Pray for: the Torres Strait Regional Authority, Torres Strait community organisations, the Gab Titui Cultural Centre and the development of social and economic life in and across the islands.

Reflection: *Gab Titui was recommended for the Cultural Centre's name by the Late Mr Ephraim Bani who was the Cultural Advisor to the committee following extensive community research. This ensured that the name would represent both Eastern and Western language dialects of the Torres Strait. 'Gab', from the eastern island group is interpreted as journey and 'Titui' from the western islands reflects stars or light. The combined name Gab Titui is therefore expressed as "Journey of the stars".*

Saturday April 22

Readings: Acts 4:13-21, Mk 16:9-15

Pray for: Waiben (Thursday Island); Bishop Saibo Mabo, NATSIEC Commissioner, and the churches of the Torres Strait

Reflection: *'I want to give you one more image from the Torres Strait to show how God is alive in our culture. Back home, at big celebrations, we cook our food in a pit-fire, which we call an Amey. When I think about an Amey, I can see so much that reminds me of the Gospel. We know that God is our Rock. And in an Amey, God is like the rocks that cook the food. We know that Jesus went into the tomb and was raised up from the ground. He was transformed into the bread of life that feeds us. In a pit fire, the food is buried and is transformed into something nourishing for all of us. The fire and the heat is like the redeeming power of God to make u new people.'* (Bishop Saibo Mabo, 'Light of Australia' talk)

Sunday 23 April 2nd Sunday of Easter

Readings: Acts 4:32-37, 1 John 1:1-2:2, John 20:19-31

Pray for: Ngurapai (Horn Island); and wise, people-centred, development in the Torres Strait

Reflection: *'An Amey doesn't just happen. You have to sweat for that food. It takes a lot of work to dig the hole and build up the fire. When people are preparing an Amey, everybody comes together and works with each other. This is my image of reconciliation. We are all one people of God...Tolerance, learning and interaction will enrich our mission in Australia, which includes working together towards liberation, reconciliation and unity in Christ.'* (Bishop Saibo Mabo, 'Light of Australia' talk)

Monday 24 April

Readings: Acts 4:23-31, John 3:1-8

Pray for: Keriri (Hammond Island)

Reflection: *'When an Amey is ready, the beautiful, sweet savour draws people from miles around. Everybody comes together to celebrate and share in the goodness, like the church comes together to share in the goodness of God. White and black, red and yellow, there are no divisions between people when an Amey is ready. Everyone is able to be fed.'* (Bishop Saibo Mabo, 'Light of Australia' talk)

Tuesday 25 April ANZAC Day St.Mark

Readings: Micah 4:1-4, Heb 10:32-11:1, John 10:1-21

Pray for: Inclusive ANZAC ceremonies and recognition of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who have fallen in defence of land and freedom; Indigenous service men and women

Reflection: *'How, then, do we deal with the Aboriginal dead? White Australians frequently say that 'all that' should be forgotten. But it won't be. Black memories are too deeply, too recently scarred. And forgetfulness is a strange prescription coming from a community which reveres the fallen warrior and emblazons the phrase "Lest We Forget" on monuments throughout the land. If the Aborigines are to enter our (sic) history 'on terms of most perfect equality'...they will bring their dead with them and expect an honoured burial...If we are to continue to celebrate the sacrifice of men and women who died for their country can we deny admission to fallen tribesmen?'* (Henry Reynolds, *The Other Side of the Frontier*)

Wednesday 26 April

Readings: Acts 5:17-26, John 3:16-21

Pray for: Moa Island, and the communities of Kubin and St.Paul's, their peoples and needs

Reflection: *'My interpretation of the Coming of the Light to the Torres Strait – and I like that term "the Coming of the Light" because it is talking about the Light which is so big that it alone can come to us, to the Torres Strait – is that it is the most precious gift ever given to the Torres Strait. That is the Light of Christ, which came to us. And in the Light of the gospel of Christ, I now look at how God worked in the Torres Strait long before 1871. Christ promised, "I have come not to destroy but to fulfil." So he came to fulfil and make much clearer his work.'* (Fr.Dave Passi, in *Indigenous Australia* eds. A.Pattel-Gray & John P.Brown, 1997)

Thursday 27 April

Readings: Acts 5:27-33, John 3:31-36

Pray for: Badu and Mabuig Islands, their peoples and needs

Reflection: *'We need to understand the Bible as whole. In reading the complete Bible, we see God in Christ reconciling the whole of the cosmos. It runs like a golden thread right through the Bible; and we must see ...(the) Torres Strait in that context because God created us. How can God leave us? God has his own way in the Torres Strait.'* (Fr.Dave Passi, in *Indigenous Australia* eds. A.Pattel-Gray & John P.Brown, 1997)

Friday 28 April

Readings: Acts 5:34-42, John 6:1-15

Pray for: Boigu and Dauan Islands, their peoples and needs

Reflection: *'Before 1871 or people did not know about Jesus, but they did know about redemption and liberation, just as the Old Testament prophets grasped the reality of God long before the coming of Jesus. As the spirit bound by the snake in Pastor George (Rosendale)'s story longed to be free and the people were looking forward in hope, so our people until 1871 were living in the Old Testament and looking forward to their liberation.'* (Fr.Dave Passi, in *Indigenous Australia* eds. A.Pattel-Gray & John P.Brown, 1997)

Saturday 29 April

Readings: Acts 6:1-7, John 6:16-21

Pray for: Saibai and Warraber (Sue) Islands; and for peacemakers in Indigenous communities and throughout the world

Reflection: *The Dari, although traditionally worn by Torres Strait Islanders during warfare is now often referred to as the 'headdress of peace', a powerful and sacred symbol of Torres Strait culture. The white feathers are clipped to represent fishtails, with a single black feather on top usually taken from a frigate bird, whilst the vertical cane lines running across the centre of the dari represent forehead crease lines (lines of wisdom).*

Sunday 30 April 3rd Sunday of Easter

Readings: Acts 3:12-20, 1 John 2:15-17 & 3:1-6; Lk 24:36b-48

Pray for: Iama (Yam) and Poruma (Coconut) Islands, their peoples and needs

Reflection: *'Imagine you are on one of the islands of the Torres Strait. There are coconut trees everywhere. Some trees have green coconuts, some yellow coconuts and others, brown coconuts. These coconuts may have different colours but coconut meat and milk all tastes the same. Likewise, God's message has been presented in different ways through the Old Testament, through the Prophets, apostles and Teachers, in a variety of ways and contexts. But, it is the same God and the same Kingdom that is proclaimed throughout the generations and in different cultures.'* (Bishop Saibo Mabo 'Light of Australia' talk, July 2003)