

NATSIEC PRAYER CALENDAR
AUGUST 2006

Tuesday 1 August

Readings: Jer 14.17-22; Mtt 13.36-43

Pray for: Maia and Malgaru Country (Kennedy Range), its people and needs

Reflection: *'Jesus knew what people were thinking. One day He said to them: You can tell what sort a tree is by the fruit on it. A good strong mango tree has good fruit on it. Old white ones with white ants won't have any good mangoes. You mob of redback spiders! How could bad people like you say anything good? How could you say anything right when you know that you are bad? A person's heart shows in what he says in his words. If a person's heart is good he will say good things. A good person's words will show like the mangoes on a strong tree. A bad person's heart is full of hate. His words show it. They mean nothing. I tell you, when you die you will come to God. If you say good words and you mean them you will stay with God. Your words must come from a good heart.'* (Cissy Djiagween and Mary Anne McKenzie's retelling of the Gospel stories, Broome way, in the Nulugnu laundry in 1990, written down by Sr.Margaret Hill in *Laundry Stories*, 1999)

Wednesday 2 August

Readings: Jer 15.10 (11-15) 16-21; Mtt 13.44-46

Pray for: Baiyungu and Thalanyji Country (Exmouth Gulf area), its people and needs

Reflection: *Wangka Maya Aboriginal Language Centre works to support Aboriginal languages in the Pilbara. There are three areas of focus involved in Wangka Maya's development of resources. Stage One is the recording and collection of the words, grammar and stories, histories and songs of a language. These are the basic elements from which a language and its culture are built. If these are recorded, then the data recorded can be used for either reconstructing the language later on, or in the development of resources for stage two. Stage Two is the development of resources for the use of the language community. These include the production of wordlists and dictionaries, grammar books, history and story books, maps, charts, music CD ROMS and video. Stage Three is the development of services that improve the interaction with the wider community. This includes interpreter and translation services, and support for school or higher education language programs.*(<http://www.wangkamaya.org.au>)

Thursday 3 August

Readings: Jer 18.1-6; Mtt 13.47-53

Pray for: Ngaluma Country (Roeburne area), its peoples and needs

Reflection: *The Ngaluma suffered a number of massacres after European incursion in the 1860s, notably in 1872 (the Flying Foam Passage Massacre) when at least 60 Aborigines were killed in retaliation for the spearing of four settlers. Those that remained were forced into work on pastoral leases or pearlshell diving. Today cultural renewal seeks to build on the remarkable survivals which endure, including Murajura, one of the largest rock galleries in the world.*

Friday 4 August

National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day

Readings: Jer 26.1-9; Mtt 13.54-58

Pray for: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and those who care for them

Reflection: *This day was first observed in 1988 and each year has a special theme. The Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care has always produced a poster to celebrate the Day. see further: <http://www.snaicc.asn.au/children/>*

Saturday 5 August

Readings: Jer 26.11-16 (17-23) 24; Mtt 14.1-12

Pray for: Yindjibarndi Country (south of Roeburne, WA), its people and needs

Reflection: *The area now encompassed by the Millstream-Chichester National Park is rich in Aboriginal Dreaming stories. To relate properly to the Deep Reach Pool for example, it is not enough to appreciate its beauty, but to know the story of the Great Snake, the protector of the waters in the area. So it is wherever we are in Australia. We need to hear and sing the song of the land.*

Sunday 6 August

Feast of the Transfiguration

Readings: Dan 7.9-10 & 13-14, 2 Pet 1.16-21, Mark 9.2-10

Pray for: the peoples of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and for the work of nuclear disarmament

Reflection: Today is the 60th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima.

'Father George Zabelka was the Catholic chaplain with the US Air Force stationed on Tinian Island in the Pacific in 1945. He recounts the following episode: "I remember one young man who was engaged in the bombings of the cities of Japan. He was in the hospital on Tinian Island on the verge of a complete mental collapse. He told me that he had been on a low-level bombing mission, flying right down one of the main streets of the city, when straight ahead of him appeared a little boy, in the middle of the street, looking up at the plane in childlike wonder. The man knew that in a few seconds this child would be burned to death by the napalm which had already been released". It is when we see, close up, the face of those we call the enemy, that we cannot escape our common humanity.' (Dr.Sue Wareham, President, Medical Association for the Prevention of War (Australia), conference paper Manning Clark House Symposium, Canberra, May 2005)

Monday 7 August

Readings: Jer 28.1-17; Mtt 14.13-21

Pray for: Kariyarra, Ngarla and Njamal Country (Hamersley Range area), its peoples and needs

Reflection: *'At one of the Queensland AICC Conferences, Fr.Frank Brennan warned that the Hawke Government was about to break several of its promises, due to pressure from the Western Australian Government at that time. People were shattered. The promises had been promoted in the national media and the Federal Minister had written to all church ministers, outlining the promises. Such hope had been raised. There was a feeling of expectation at the Conference, only to be warned that the Government would renege. Yet that night, people sang and told stories. There was such a wonderful sense of community and hope for the future, even though the Commonwealth Government had sacrificed principles for power. I learnt that night about survival, pride in culture, humble and hope-filled spirituality, planning for the long term, the value of community and relationships. That night I received a wonderful contribution. It has pointed me to a deeper understanding of the Bible and been a memory I could draw on in the struggle for East Timor.'* (The Indigenous Australian Catholic Journey: Reflections by Fr.Gerry Hefferan at the NATSIEC Hearts are Burning gathering in Brisbane, 3 May 2005)

Tuesday 8 August

Readings: Jer 30.12-22; Mtt 15.1-2 (3-9) 10-14

Pray for: Bunjima, Gurrama and Innawonga Country (Hamersley Range area), its peoples and needs

Reflection: *'There is a new international resource in the Catholic church called 'The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church' (Vatican edition 2004) by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. It states in section 471 that 'the relationship of indigenous peoples to their lands and resources deserves particular attention, since it is a fundamental expression of their identity. Due to powerful agro-industrial interests or the powerful processes of assimilation and urbanisation, many of these peoples have already lost or risk losing the lands on which they live, lands tied to the very meaning of their existence. The rights of indigenous peoples must be appropriately protected. These peoples offer an example of a life lived in harmony with the environment that they have come to know well and to preserve. Their extraordinary experience, which is an irreplaceable resource for all humanity, runs the risk of being lost together with the environment from which they originate.'* (from The Indigenous Australian Catholic Journey: Reflections by Fr.Gerry Hefferan at the NATSIEC Hearts are Burning gathering in Brisbane, 3 May 2005)

Wed 9 August International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples (United Nations)

Readings: Jer 31.1-7; Mtt 15.21-28

Pray for: the UN Permanent Forum and all those working through the UN and in international solidarity for the rights of Indigenous peoples across the world

Reflection: In 1994, the first year of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (1994-2004), the United Nations decided that 9 August every year during this decade be observed as the International Day of the World's Indigenous People. According to UNESCO, there are 350 million indigenous people worldwide, living in 70 countries, representing more than 5000 languages. *At the beginning of time, as God's Spirit moved over the waters, he began to communicate something of his goodness and beauty to all creation...For thousands of years you have lived in this land and fashioned a culture that endures to this day. And during all this time, the Spirit of God has been with you. Your "Dreaming", which influences your lives so strongly that, no matter what happens, you remain for ever people of your culture, is your own way of touching the mystery of God's Spirit in you and in creation.*

For thousands of years this culture of yours was free to grow without interference by people from other places. You lived your lives in spiritual closeness to the land, with its animals, birds, fishes, water-holes, rivers, hills and mountains. Through your closeness to the land you touched the sacredness of man's relationship with God, for the land was the proof of a power in life greater than yourselves. You did not spoil the land, use it up, exhaust it, and then walk away from it. You realised that your land was related to the source of life. (Pope John Paul II, Speaking to Indigenous Australians, Alice Springs, 29/9/86)

Thursday 10 August

Readings: Jer 31.31-34; Mtt 16.13-23

Pray for: Martu Country (Western Pilbara), its peoples and needs

Reflection: *'Our journey of Indigenous Christianity is one that is fuelled by an unwavering spirit for justice, understanding and a real desire to minister holistically with out people, a people willing to succeed and aspire given the right framework. Now more than ever we need to minister amongst our people. We need to continue to offer strength, guidance and hope.'* (Restoring a Shalom, address by the Revd.Shayne Blackman to the NATSIEC 'Hearts are Burning' Forum in Townsville, 4 May 2005)

Friday 11 August

Readings: Nahum 2.1-12; Mtt 16.24-28

Pray for: Jukun and Yawuru Country (Broome area), its peoples and needs

Reflection: *'Jesus told this story. One of you has a big mob of fish in your bag. If one of your fish gets caught in a net in shallow water, won't you go back and look for it and take the fish out of the water, won't you go back and look for it and take the fish out of the net? And when you have taken it out of the net, won't you put the fish in your bag and put the bag on your shoulder feeling really pleased? And when you go to your place, you will call together your friends and relations and say to them: Come and have tea with me. I am very pleased. I have brought back the fish that was caught in the net. I am telling you this story, Jesus said, to show you there will be more chance for one person who is sorry for doing wrong than a big mob of people who think they are not sinners and don't feel sorry for anything. This one person makes God and everybody else happy.'* (Cissy Djiagween and Mary Anne McKenzie's retelling of the Gospel stories, Broome way, in the Nulugnu laundry in 1990, written down by Sr.Margaret Hill in *Laundry Stories*, 1999)

Saturday 12 August

Readings: Habakkuk 1.12-2.4; Mtt 17.14-20

Pray for: Bardi Country (Dampier Peninsula), its people and needs

Reflection: *'Then Jesus told another story to the same people. There was a woman who had a lot of jewellery. She lost one ring. So she turned on the light and looked around for it everywhere until she found it. And when she had found it she called together her friends and relations and said to them: Come and have tea with me. I am very happy. I have found the ring t hat was lost. I am telling you there is a lot of happiness when one person, after a long time, feels*

*ssy Djiagween and Mary Anne McKenzie's retelling of the Gospel stories, Broome n down by Sr.Margaret Hill in *Laundry Stories*, 1999)*

Sunday after Pentecost

Readings: Mt 23.1-33; Eph 4.(17-24)25-5.2; John 6.35,41-51

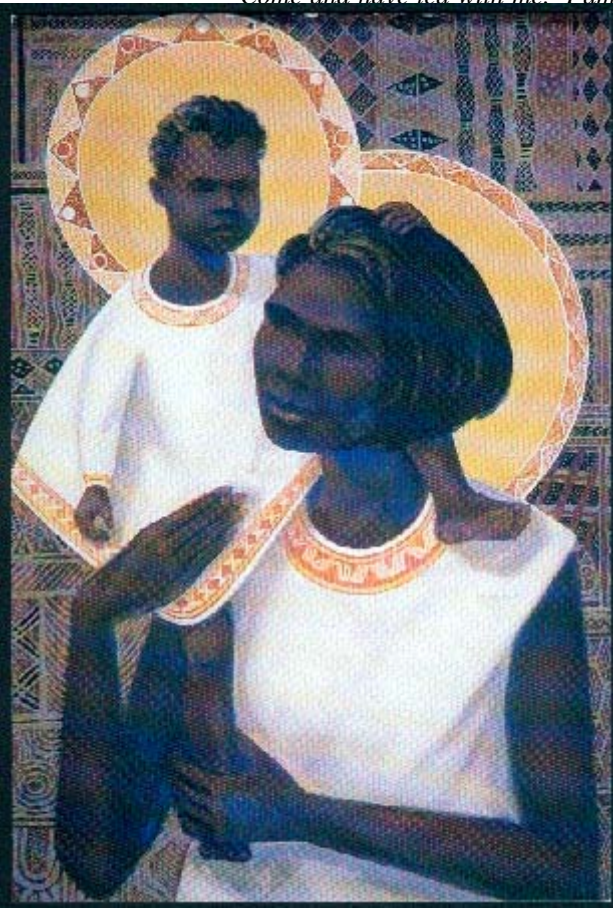
Pray for: Derby area), its people and needs

Reflection: *Some people in Broome have produced some wonderful books to entertain, 'The Best Little Knitter in the West', written by Nyikina author and vividly illustrated by Nyikina artist Samantha Cook. Indeed, local author Anita Heiss, 'it may be the Indigenous answer to the very important and entertaining messages', another example of the in this area.*

Readings: Mt 24-28c; Mtt 17.22-27

Pray for: Gibb River Road area), its people and needs

Reflection: *Madonna is a figure found in many churches across Australia, an es, and a reminder that the message of Christianity is universal A al for example, is a large oil painting depicting the Virgin Mary and lthough the work of a visiting European artist, Karel Kupka, of the Virgin Mary is depicted with the characteristic features and skin Her face is a composite portrait from many sketches of different*



'sitters', done by the artist on various Territory missions. She has a white dress with a red collar, embroidered in an aboriginal design. The Holy Child, also of typical aboriginal features and dressed in a white smock, edged with aboriginal designs in red, is seated on the Mother's shoulder, in the typical aboriginal style of carrying an infant. Behind the heads of Mother and Child are golden haloes, painted flatly in the style of a Byzantine icon, but edged also with perimeters of authentic tribal design in red. The background of the picture is an intricate pattern of abstract totemic designs, faithfully copied from bark paintings, cave drawings and decorations of native artifacts from all tribes of the Northern Territory, Central Australia and the Kimberley.

Tuesday 15 August St.Mary the Virgin

Readings: Isa 61.10-62.3; Gal 4.4-7; Luke 2.1-7

Pray for: Recognition and renewal of the spirit of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

Reflection: The Reconciliation Church in La Perouse, Sydney sees the Ancient Women of Australia mirrored by Mary the Madonna. The painting of Mary in the church by Aboriginal artist Richard Campbell reflects this well...

'The nature of this land, is shown forth in its simplicity through the female symbols of faces and figures in this visual image. The hands forming the background express the eternal message of God in the constant Presence. The large Circle connecting to small circle represents the Holy Spirit constantly coming down to us, and also the connection of Heaven to earth. In Aboriginal Spirituality cylindrical shapes form the cycle of life. We believe we come from the Spirit World and we will return, through our animal totems and that the circle of life continues. Two small circles connected in the centre represent the Action of the Spirit and the Madonna's response, bringing forth the birth of Christ. The Madonna's cradled arms represent the vessel of life, nurturing all in God's love. Around the figures of Mother and Child is an Aura, symbolising the Mimi Spirits: our past Elders revealing themselves to us to remind us of their wisdom still present. White Dots represent the presence of our Creator Spirit, God. (<http://www.aboriginalcm.cathcomm.org/aboriginalCM/LaPerouse/MaryandChild.htm>)

Wednesday Aug. 16 Traditional land returned to Gurindji People 40th anniversary!

Readings: Ezek 9.1-7 & 10.18-22; Mtt 18.1-5 (6-9) 10-14

Pray for: the Gurindji people and for all struggling for land, fair conditions and their dignity

Reflection: *Aboriginal workers on Wave Hill Station which was owned by the British meat company, Vestey, went on strike on August 22, 1966, in protest against the low pay (\$6 per week), poor working conditions (12 hour day, 7 days per week) and abusive treatment they were receiving. They moved to their traditional land at Daguragu (Wattie Creek), resisting all attempts to move them, defying white law and following their own. On April 19, 1967, the Gurindji People, led by Vincent Lingiari, presented a petition to the Governor General, Lord Casey, seeking adequate pay and conditions, access to educational and medical facilities and control and ownership of their traditional lands.*

The strike turned into a nine year struggle focussed on land rights. On August 16, 1975, Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, handed back to Vincent Lingiari the crown lease to 3000 sq km of Gurindji land at Daguragu. Ten years later, after the passage of the Northern Territory Land Rights Act, the Gurindji people gained full rights to their land.

Thursday 17 August

Readings: Ezek 12.1-12; Mtt 18.21-19.1

Pray for: Gamberre and Miwa Country (Kalumburu area), its people and needs

Reflection: *Kalumburu is the most northerly point of Western Australia reachable by road. The surrounding Mitchell Plateau is rich in Wandjina paintings, among the most famous of all Aboriginal images. In the spirituality of the people, the Wandjina are the shadows of ancestors, marked on the rock as they pass by. Each Wandjina traditionally had its own custodian family and, to ensure good relations between Wandjina and the people, the images needed renewing each year.*

Friday 18 August

Readings: Ezek 16.(1-15) 59-63; Mtt 19.3-12

Pray for: Bunuba Country (Fitzroy area), its peoples and needs

Reflection: *Why is one man's (Ned Kelly's) resistance to the law of another culture known by all Australians, and not other the resistance of other Australians to an even more crushingly alien law and culture? Even in the USA the names of Indigenous resistance leaders such as Geronimo and Cochise have a place in the hearts of many whose forebears dispossessed them.*

The invasion of the pastoralists was particularly strongly resisted by the Buruba. The legendary exploits of the outlaw and Aboriginal hero Jandamarra ('Pigeon') continue to especially remembered as inspirational by his people.

Saturday 19 August

Readings: Ezek 18.1-13,30-32; Mtt 19.13-15

Pray for: Djaru and Kija Country (Halls Creek area), its people and needs

Reflection: *Heather McDonald's book 'Blood, Bones and Spirit: Aboriginal Christianity in an East Kimberley Town' (Melbourne Univ. 2002) offers useful insights into how the Gospel is differently received and expressed by many Aboriginal Christians in contrast to Christians of a Western European background. Not least this can be seen in relationship to the Christian affirmation of healing and salvation through Christ's blood, whereby reconciliation to God, others and the wider world is effected. There is for instance a different emphasis on the regenerative rather than the redemptive power of Jesus blood. Instead of being overly related to death, guilt and punishment, here the blood of Jesus is strong and fructifying, building up bodies and increasing mental and emotional strength, enabling Christians to hold their families together and create ties of harmony rather than enmity between family groups. This correlates well with traditional Aboriginal ideas that blood carries the life-force, and Heather McDonald's anthropological understanding that "during initiation ceremonies, novices drink the blood of ritually experienced men in order to imbibe their qualities and strength".*

Sunday 20 August 11th Sunday after Pentecost

Readings: 1 Kings 2.10-12 & 3.3-14; Eph 5.11-21 (22-31); John 6.51-58

Pray for: Warmun community and Aboriginal artists of Western Australia

Reflection: *The Warmun community may be small and remote to many outsiders, but, like other communities with now prominent renowned artists, it is immensely rich in understanding and appreciation of the spirit. The key is the profound connection with the land and learning of the elders, nourished in law and culture.*

Monday 21 August

Readings: Ezek 24.15-24; Mtt 19.16-22

Pray for: Miriwoong Country (Kununurra area), its people and needs

Reflection: *The Dreamtime Statues in Wyndham were presented to the town by the Jarrok Ngarni Aboriginal community for the Bicentennial and are a striking example of Aboriginal pride and reaffirmation in Western Australia. Dedicated to 'those who prepared us for today', they comprise of a family and their animals, sculpted in bronze and wire. The father towers above looking towards new hunting grounds, with the mother a child at rest close by. 'Aboriginal spirits', they affirm, 'will always survive in this timeless land.'*

Tuesday 22 August

Readings: Ezek 28.1-10; Mtt 19.23-30

Pray for: Warntarri Purlumanupurru (Canning Stock Route area), its peoples and needs

Reflection: *Warlayirti Artists is recognised as a leader in best practice in the Indigenous art industry, supporting the art and culture of the Kutjungka region and, operating from a community development framework, maximising the participation of the Indigenous people. Since 2002 has completely self-funded the operation of the Art Centre - one of very few Indigenous art centres in Australia to achieve this level of self-sufficiency. Warlayirti. (<http://www.balgoart.org.au>)*

Wed 23 August Anniversary of 1936 Torres Strait Islander trochus boats strike

Readings: Ezek 34.1-11; Mtt 20.1-16a

Pray for: all those who make their living from the sea, for fair conditions and safety

Reflection: *Resistance to colonisation in the Torres Strait has taken many forms, one of the most successful being the 1936 trochus boats strike, ironically assisted by the growth of a Torres Strait Islander identity produced by colonialist rule. Indeed, by 1936, Torres Strait creole had developed throughout the Strait as a lingua franca and Torres Strait Islander English had become a regional dialect. The strike lasted for four months in the western islands, while in the east the Murray Islanders boycotted the government-controlled fisheries until after world war II, sustained by their gardens and the sea. Appropriately enough, Koiki Mabo was born in the same year.*

Thursday 24 August St. Bartholomew

Readings: Deut 18.15-18, Rev 21.9b-14, John 1.45-51

Pray for: All those Indigenous Christian pioneers whose ministries have been forgotten or unnamed

Reflection: *All that is known of St.Bartholomew with certainty is that he is mentioned in the synoptic gospels and Acts as one of the twelve apostles. His name, a patronymic, means "son of Tolomai" and some scholars believe he is the same as Nathanael mentioned in John, who says he is from Cana and that Jesus called him an "Israelite...incapable of deceit." The Roman Martyrology says he preached in India and Greater Armenia, where he was flayed and beheaded by King Astyages. Tradition has the place as Abanopolis on the west coast of the Caspian Sea and that he also preached in Mesopotamia, Persia, and Egypt.*

Friday 25 August

Readings: Ezek 37.1-14; Mtt 22.34-40

Pray for: Ngaanyatjarra Country (Warburton and surrounds), its people and needs

Reflection: *In June 2005, the Federal Court finally recognised the country's biggest native title claim in Western Australia's central desert region, granting full and exclusive rights to the people of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands. The land covers more than 180,000 square kilometres, taking in the Mt Gibson and Great Victoria Deserts, and extending to the South Australian and Northern Territory borders. The deal was eventually struck through negotiation rather than court disputation, after more than 20 years of land rights struggle by the people.*

Saturday 26 August

Readings: Ezek 43.1-7a; Mtt 23.1-12

Pray for: Indigenous Ministries in Victoria

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)*

Sunday 27 August Refugee and Migrant Sunday

Readings: 1 Kings 8 (1,6,10-11) 22-30, 41-43; Eph 6.10-20; John 6.56-69

Pray for: refugees across the world and more just refugee policies in Australia

Reflection: *God, You are the source of human dignity, and it is in your image that we are created. Pour out on us the spirit of love and compassion. Enable us to reverence each person, to reach out to anyone in need, to value and appreciate those who differ from us, to share the resources of our nation, to receive the gifts offered to us by people from other cultures. Grant that we may always promote the justice and acceptance that ensures lasting peace and racial harmony. Help us to remember that we are one world and one family. Amen (Refugee and Migrant Sunday kit 2005)*

Monday 28 August

Readings: Exod 3.1-15, Rom 12.9-21, Matt 16.21-28

Pray for: The Victorian Council of Churches and its member churches in their partnerships with Indigenous people

Reflection: *'Somehow, the cornerstone has been misplaced. It has to be rediscovered and given its rightful priority, otherwise we are not a nation built on rock but on sand. It is time now to let go of our fears and begin with the cornerstone of Hope and the underlying wisdom of our ancestors who as stewards and guardians of the land, kept it sustainable for thousands of generations. There is a need to re-examine the western belief of mechanistic reductionism that has dominated not only the world but the Churches'. (E.Pike Hope Built on the Dreaming)*

Tuesday 29 August

Readings: 2 Thess 1.1-5 (6-11a) 11b-12; Mtt 23.13-22

Pray for: Narana Creations and other initiatives of the Uniting Congress in Victoria

Reflection: *Narana Creations is an Australian Aboriginal cultural tourism & educational enterprise that is committed to providing a welcome entree to today's Indigenous culture. Based in Grovedale, Geelong, it is a division of the Uniting Aboriginal and*

Islander Christian Congress and an example of the Congress' practical work of providing pathways of education, employment, and empowerment

Wednesday 30 August

Readings: 2 Thess 3.1-18; Mtt 23.27-32

Pray for: Yarra Healing and the work of just Reconciliation in Victoria

Reflection: *Yarra Healing promotes the voices of local Indigenous people of Melbourne and its surrounding areas. It gives expression to their stories and to the growth of the Reconciliation movement not only in Melbourne but across the nation. Its website is supported by the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne as part of its commitment to Indigenous people.*

Thursday 31 August

Readings: 1 Cor 1.1-9; Mtt 24.42-51

Pray for: Vicki Walker, the *Opening the Doors* Foundation, and Aboriginal Education initiatives in Victoria

Reflection: *The Opening the Doors Foundation was launched in August 2001 on National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day. It aims to support Indigenous children to have choices in education, filling gaps in service provision not presently available through existing organisations.*