

NATSIEC PRAYER CALENDAR MARCH 2006

Wednesday 1 March Ash Wednesday (Nuclear Free Pacific Day)

Readings: Joel 2.1-2,12-17 and Mtt 6:1-6,16-21

Pray for: The survivors and continued effects of nuclear testing in the Pacific and those work with them.

Reflection: *Today is the anniversary of the US 'Bravo' nuclear bomb detonation close to the surface of Bikini Atoll, which gouged out a crater 75 metres deep and 1800 metres across, melted huge quantities of coral, sucked them up and distributed them far and wide across the Pacific. The island of Rongelap (160 kms) was buried in powdery particles of radioactive fallout to a depth of one and a half inches, and Utirik (480 kms away) was swathed in radioactive mist. The people of Rongelap and Utirik lived on their newly radioactive islands for three days, inhaling, touching and ingesting the fallout particles, until the US navy sent ships to evacuate them.*

Thursday 2 March

Readings: Deut 30:15-20, Luke 9:22-25

Pray for: CTIPP (the Churches Together Indigenous Peoples Partnership) with Queensland Churches Together

Reflection: *In Queensland, the work of CTIPP (formerly known as Churches Together Aboriginal Partnership) has been instrumental in educating for reconciliation. The CTIPP visits schools and tertiary institutions, provides a consultancy service to educational authorities and provides input in reconciliation workshops and church services. The presence of the CTIPP in the life and work of Queensland Churches Together has been important in the growth of awareness and understanding of the issues around reconciliation.*

Friday 3 March

Readings: Isa 58:1-9a, Mtt 9.14-15

Pray for: Murri Ministries, Brisbane

Reflection: *Murri Ministry is a Centacare agency that provides pastoral ministry and spiritual assistance, consistent with Aboriginal culture, tradition and insights, within the Archdiocese of Brisbane and the wider community. It covers areas from Hervey Bay to Tweed Heads and Cherbourg to Stradbroke Island.*

Saturday 4 March

Readings: Isa 58:9b-14, Lk 5:27-32

Pray for: Yuggera Country, Aboriginal and Torres Strait people living in the Brisbane area, and the traditional owners of the country.

Reflection: *'Sunset across the waters of Quandamooka is a special time for prayerful reflection. The beauty of the sun gently sneaking away to continue nourishing life elsewhere is a wonder of God's creation. The knowledge that tomorrow will be the dawning of a new day whether the sun shines or sky rains or the clouds take over creates a sense of being a small part of God's creation and the responsibility to respect whole creation. The shells on the seashore, some whole, others broken, and many crushed by the footsteps of people, are a reminder of living life and the reality that the cross is heavier for many. Being in touch with Creator Spirit at this special time of the day is only one means of living relationships with Creator God through creation. The cross is a powerful symbol and reflects the journey of caring and sharing the load of living life.'* (Story, based on a painting, by Joan Hendriks)

Sunday 5 March 1st Sunday in Lent

Readings: Gen 9:8-17, 1 Peter 3:18-22, Mk 1:9-15

Pray for: Gubbi Gubbi Country, its peoples and needs

Reflection: The story of what more recently have been called the Glasshouse Mountains is a story with deep meanings about life, family, responsibility, sustainability and the sacredness of our connections with all about us –

One day Tibrogargan noticed that the sea was rising and gathered his children to flee to safety. He ordered his son Coonowrin to help Beerwah, the mother, who was heavily pregnant, but Coonowrin fled. Angered, Tibrogargan struck him with his club and dislodged his neck. When the floods subsided Coonowrin begged his father's forgiveness, but Tibrogargan could only weep tears of shame at his son's cowardice; likewise, his brothers and sisters wept copious tears and many streams thus run off the mountains today.

Monday 6 March

Readings: Lev 19:1-2,11-18 and Mtt 25:31-46
Pray for: Barunggam Country, its peoples and needs
Reflection: *Father of all, you gave us the Dreaming.
You have spoken to us through our beliefs.
You then made your love clear to us in the person of Jesus.
We thank you for your care. You own us. You are our Hope.
Make us strong as we face the problems of change.
We ask you to help the people of Australia
To listen to us and respect our culture.
Make the knowledge of you grow strong in all people,
So that you can be at home in us
and we can make a home for everyone in our Land. Amen*
(Prayer of the Aboriginal People, composed for the Pope's visit to Alice Springs in 1986)

Tuesday 7 March

Readings: Isa 55:10-11, Mtt 6:7-15
Pray for: Waka Waka Country, its people & needs; and especially Cherbourg community
Reflection: *'I know where I come from and when you talk to the Commissioners you will hear stories about who they are, they are people who have been given an identity that is God given. This identity is so important; it is protocol as I have said. When you meet an Aboriginal person you will always get a smile, sometimes a handshake, sometimes hug or sometimes someone will just pat you on the shoulder. This is an important time for us to say hello, identification is important, I can't stress the importance of that, I honestly can't say enough about who we are.'* (Marceil Lawrence, 'Light of Australia' talk, July 2004)

Wednesday 8 March

Readings: Jonah 3:1-10, Lk 11:29-32
Pray for: Badtjala Country, its peoples and needs
Reflection: *The original name for Fraser Island is K'gari, which means 'Paradise' and, in Badtjala Dreaming, is named after a spirit who helped the Great Spirit, Beeral, create the earth and other worlds. K'gari loved the earth so much she asked Beeral to let her live there and he so he changed her into a beautiful island, with trees and animals for company, and limpid lakes for eyes through which she could gaze up at the heavens, her former home.*

Thursday 9 March

Readings: Addns to Esther 14:3-14, Mtt 7:7-12
Pray for: Darumbal Country, its peoples and needs; for Ernie Trevaskis, NATSIEC Commissioner, and Aboriginal ministries in Rockhampton; and Woorabinda Aboriginal Community
Reflection: *'The emergence of one's Aboriginal spirituality, when ignored and suppressed for so long, is unstoppable when the power of the spirit is behind it. Not knowing or even realising what was ahead was most trying, naturally, but there were religious persons around who said do this, do that, read this or that, the start of (my growing in) the Catholic education and the Catholic laws. The joy of all this new knowledge and sense of belonging to a spiritual family, sharing their faith and beliefs, was s wonderful. As the knowledge and wisdom from the bible grows, so too does the powerful spiritual feeling from our ancestors of that great power and wisdom of the creator and of all that has been given to us, faith and belief.'* (Ernie Trevaskis, 'Becoming an Aboriginal Catholic at 40', in *A Spirituality of Aboriginal Catholics and the Struggle for Justice* (1993))

Friday 10 March

Readings: Ezek 18:21-28, Mtt 5:20-26
Pray for: Gangulu Country, its peoples and needs
Reflection: *"if we are to ground our theology in this land we need to begin by getting hooked into the stories of struggle, survival and liberation of the Bible and the peoples of Indigenous Australia. We remember the texts of our faith and celebrate our communion and our connection with God by remembering our connection to Christ's last meal with his disciples. Our remembering defines who we are and who we will be. Without remembering, our faith will die and our connection with God may be lost.'* (Peter Lewis 'Grounding the Trinity in Australia: Reconciliation and the Blood of the Covenant' paper)

Saturday 11 March

Readings: Deut 26:16-19, Mtt 5:43-48
Pray for: Garingbal Country, its peoples and needs
Reflection: *'As a people who are called to remember the death and resurrection of a man who was killed by the forgetful religious leaders of the kingdom of Judaea and the colonial leaders of Rome we need not only to respect the remembering of other peoples. We are called to see Christ's presence in the Spirit among the first Australians who have been disconnected by a forgetful Church and an invading power.'* (Peter Lewis 'Grounding the Trinity in Australia: Reconciliation and the Blood of the Covenant' paper)

Sunday 12 March 2nd Sunday in Lent

Readings: Gen 17:1-7,15-16; Rom 4:13-25; Mk 8:31-38
Pray for: the peoples and needs of the Palm Islands
Reflection: *'I said when I was on Palm Island almost two weeks ago that the Palm Island Catholic community is the most important parish community in the diocese. I am not sure if all those who heard me understood why I said that. It was because the Palm Island Catholic community and the larger community of Palm Island are the communities experiencing the greatest pain in our diocese at the moment, and where there is pain there is Jesus Christ. Where there is the greatest pain he is most powerfully present and where Jesus is most powerfully, there is the centre of our diocese... Our world is imperfect, all our programs and initiatives are imperfect, but this must not stop us. The worst possible outcome of this present crisis would be that we would give up trying because of it. No matter how imperfect our world and how much we have to deal with and put up with and live with, no matter who we are, indigenous or not, we must never give up. We have no right to give up because Christ has set us free and Christ has won the victory.'* (Bishop Michael Putney, Homily at Mass for Reconciliation 14 Dec 2004, shortly after the death of Cameron Doomadgee in police custody)

Monday 13 March

Readings: Daniel 9:4-10, Lk 6:36-38
Pray for: Giya Country, its peoples and needs
Reflection: *'Because of Christ we will not settle for partnership and collaboration, programs and initiatives, important as these are. We can only rest if we are one family, if all are brothers and sisters, if all are truly friends. Anything less is not fully faithful to what Jesus Christ outlined in his preaching and as we heard he preached in the synagogue at Nazareth. But we cannot be friends if we do not know each other and we cannot know each other if we do not go to meet each other.'* (Bishop Michael Putney, Homily at Mass for Reconciliation 14 Dec 2004)

Tuesday 14 March

Readings: Isa 1:10-20, Mtt 23:1-12
Pray for: Nyawaygi, Gugu-Badhun & Bindil Country, their peoples and needs; Lurleen Blackman, NATSIEC Commissioner; the work of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress in Queensland, and Shalom College in Townsville
Reflection: *In response to the commission of Christ "to make disciples of all nations", the Congress gives priority to wholistic evangelism. This means that Congress will seek to minister in love to people in all their needs: spiritual, political, physical, social and cultural. Believing that a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is the basis for true salvation and reconciliation between people and God, Congress will endeavour to bring people into relationship with God through faith and baptism. Mindful too that it must witness to the hope and reality of the reign of God, Congress will share the vision of this reign with people in all their need: it will offer hope to the hopeless and apathetic; it will seek to empower the powerless, to break the chains of their oppression; it will seek to build community on the basis of justice for all people. (from the UAICC Statement of Belief)*

Wednesday 15 March

Readings: Jer 18:18-20, Mtt 20:17-28
Pray for: Jirrbal Country, its peoples and needs
Reflection: *'Stereotyped images of nomads moving in dry, hot desert landscapes, living in basic shelters and eating kangaroo cooked on an open fire are often associated with Aboriginal cultures today. But the Jirrbal people do not fit this mould. In Tropical North Queensland, where the rain pours down for weeks on end, and rivers and creeks surge and swell, they thrived under the dense canopy of the region's lush rainforest. Living in semi-permanent villages in dome-shaped houses, the Jirrbal people used ground ovens and smoking racks to produce meals of baked fish, smoked eel and porridge processed from toxic nuts. They owned shields and swords for ritual dispute settling and developed a major road system to link settlement and ceremonial sites. Their large dome-shaped houses were thatched to keep out the weather. External drainage channels were added to cope with the*

wet weather, along with trodden earth floors and a fireplace during the colder months. This traditional Aboriginal lifestyle is being showcased in a new interpretive centre. Named Nganyaji by Jirrbal Elders, which means "all of us together", the centre was built next to the Ravenshoe Koombooloomba Wet Tropics World Heritage Area Visitors Centre in Herberton Shire. The local Jirrbal people were intricately involved in planning for the project and it fulfils several long-held aspirations of the Jirrbal Elders to present their fascinating heritage to their own community and visitors to the region in a single, unified location.

Nganyaji is designed to create an awareness that traditional life is not something in the distant past, rather that significant elements of this lifestyle continue within the living memory of the Jirrbal and non-Jirrbal community members. Strong family, language, social and economic ties existed between Jirrbal groups and their neighbours and these affiliations were crucial in assisting Jirrbal attempts to resist the encroachment of European settlement on traditional lifestyle, which continued well into the 20th century. Today many Jirrbal descendants live in Ravenshoe as well as Mount Garnet, Herberton and the Jumbun community at Murray Upper. Others live and work in many other places. There are Jirrbal Elders who personally remember traditional life and the cultural and personal impact of European settlement. They speak the Jirrbal language fluently and share a practical knowledge of many aspects of traditional life. Contemporary artistic expression among younger people incorporates many traditional elements, and it's hoped this passion for their traditional culture will allow local Jirrbal people to share their culture with visitors to the interpretive centre'.

(story by Sue Fuller for Tourism Queensland, April 2004, used with permission)

Thursday 16 March

Readings: Jer 17:5-10, Lk 16:19-31

Pray for: Yidinjdiji Country, its peoples and needs; and especially Yarrabah Aboriginal Community

Reflection: *The name Yarrabah (originally Yarraburra) relates to the white-bellied sea-eagle, or fish-hawk, and its flight as it hunts.*

Friday 17 March

Readings: Gen 37:3-28, Mtt 21:33-46

Pray for: Wontulp-Bi-Buya College, NATSIEC Chair Bishop Jim Leftwich and Indigenous ministries in Cairns

Reflection: *The name Wontulp Bi-Buya is made up of an Aboriginal language word and two Torres Strait language words. The name stands for faith and the light of Christ. A partner college to Nungalinya College in Darwin, Wontulp Bi-Buya forms a network of people involved in regional programs and distance education studies that aim to develop leadership and life in church and community.*

Saturday 18 March

Readings: Micah 7:14-20, Lk 15:1-3, 11-32

Pray for: Djabugandiji Country, its peoples and needs

Reflection: *How do we best depict in a word the most appropriate way for non-Indigenous Australians to relate to and support the well-being and progress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians? Past practices have been depicted in such words as segregation, assimilation, integration, and more recently self-determination and self-management. In practice over time, the limitations of a particular model eventually emerge. The 'self' models, which involve others stepping aside and letting go, have limitations when there is a lack of skills and resources for self-development or lack of awareness of what is necessary or when access to resources becomes conditional or dependent on outside conditions or control. Other words to consider are: Accompaniment, Partnership and Empowerment. **Accompaniment** is described as a model in which the disadvantaged or minority group is able to choose to invite others to accompany them on their journey of personal development and effective participation in the life of the nation. "And it seems that in the process of accompaniment, that those who ask it and those who respond move to a new place in human experience." The invitation is not to be dominating or controlling, but to be supportive of their legitimate aspirations and supportive in needed skills, resources and training – with an openness to learning language, culture, new insights, mutual respect and walking together in the struggle to survive and prosper. Accompaniment is an interesting word because of the sense of invitation rather than imposition. There may be a danger though, of being patronising or of not asking the hard questions. Another word that has current use in Queensland is **Partnership**. **Partnership** is stronger than Accompaniment and reflects an equality of relationship and a negotiated partnership, ready to face the challenges together.*

*The Cape York Partnership Plan2 for community/people development is a good example – it aims to tackle issues of passive welfare and dysfunction, to promote choices and opportunities, and it emphasises both rights and responsibilities. No way is perfect, but the Accompaniment and Partnership models are creative ways to build on the Reconciliation process. What lies beyond partnership? A word that is real to this College is **Empowerment**. For us this means equipping adult Indigenous Australians to be confident in living and leadership and encouraging them to make positive contributions to people development in their home communities. These are goals that we value and promote at Wontulp-Bi-Buya College. (David Thompson, Assistant Principal, Wontulp Bi-Buya News June 2003)*

Sunday 19 March 3rd SUNDAY IN LENT

Readings: Exod 20:1-17, 1 Cor 1:18-25, John 2:13-22

Pray for: Kuku-Yalandji Country, its peoples and needs: and especially for Wujal Wujal community and Peter Wallace, NATSIEC Commissioner

Reflection: *Lutheran ministry in Far North Queensland is centred on the tribal Aborigines at Hope Vale and Wujal Wujal and urban Aborigines in Cairns. It is symbolised in the image and story of the black and white cockatoo, shared by Aboriginal Pastor George Rosendale, a symbolism which offers a powerful focus for reconciliation and healing.*

Monday 20 March St. Joseph

Readings: 2 Sam 7:4-16, Matt 1:18-25

Pray for: Colin Davis' street ministry in Redfern, and for all Aboriginal men who are fathers and husbands: that their lives may be strengthened by the love of God which was in Joseph, that they may care for all in their lives with that same grace and compassion.

Reflection: *'Colin Davis exercises a vital street ministry in Redfern, based on Matthew 25 – feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, care for the sick, visit those in prison. A particularly important aspect of his ministry is also that to and with men: as his card ("Paint Your Story") says, there are four important elements to learn in growing as a man – 'How to be a father; how to be a husband; how to be responsible; how to accept NO'...Colin is also in parts of his ministry by his wife Rita. Their presence, as happy reunited couple, is a blessing to others.'* (NSWEC Redfern report, 2004, *Life in Fullness*)

Tuesday March 21 Harmony Day/

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Readings: Song of 3YM 2,11-20, Mtt 18:21-35

Pray for: Harmony Day initiatives throughout Australia at this time and for a greater will and imagination to address continuing problems of racism within our nation.

Reflection: *Today marks the beginning of a Week of Solidarity with people struggling against racism and racial discrimination. Harmony Day provides the opportunity to think about the social, cultural and economic benefits of multiculturalism. On or around this day each year, governments, councils, businesses, schools and community groups provide opportunities for us to join in creative ways of celebrating Australian multiculturalism.*

Wednesday March 22 World Day for Water

Readings: Deut 4:1-9, Mtt 5:17-19

Pray for: Adequate provision of up-to-date water and sewerage systems for Aboriginal communities; sustainable use and greater spiritual awareness of Australia's water resources; clean water supplies for the poor throughout the world.

Reflection: *The purpose of the World Day for Water is to focus attention on the need to address the problems relating to our drinking water supply and to increase awareness of the importance of conservation, preservation, and protection of water resources and drinking water supply. Drinking water sources throughout the world are depleting. Water resource development contributes to economic productivity and social well being.*

Thursday 23 March

Readings: Isa 50.4-9a, Heb 12.1-3, John 13.21-32

Pray for: Guugu-Yinidhurr Country, its peoples and needs; and especially for Hopevale community and the ministries of Pastor George Rosendale and the Lutheran Church

Reflection: On this day in 1969, the Aboriginal Welfare Board was abolished after 96 years of oppression. *'Families living together in one house, they share everything, they care for one another. Do you see that in a white man's house? Soon as people get other relatives, the house people they get*

cranky, they say," *Look, they'll have to find their own place, they can't be living her with us, this is our home, they have to go.*" *Sometimes you only see husband and wife in a big house, they won't even allow their children to live in the house with them. They might only spend a few days and holidays, but not living with them. You go to Aboriginal homes and whatever community you go to – Hopevale, Wujal Wujal, Lockhart – people are caring for one another, sharing with one another.'* (Pastor George Rosendale Milbi Dabaar)

Friday 24 March Anniversary of the Assassination of Oscar Romero

Readings: Hos 14:2-10, Mk 12:28-34

Pray for: El Salvador; and for prophetic witness against injustice wherever it is found

Reflection: Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador became a powerful prophetic critic of injustice and advocate of the poor and for human rights and was gunned down while saying Mass on this day in 1980. In his own words: *"A church that suffers no persecution but enjoys the privileges and support of the things of the earth - beware! - is not the true church of Jesus Christ. A preaching that does not point out sin is not the preaching of the gospel. A preaching that makes sinners feel good, so that they are secured in their sinful state, betrays the gospel's call."*

Saturday 25 March Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary

Readings: Isa 7:10-14, Heb 10:4-10, Lk 1:26-38

Pray for: A deeper understanding of the place of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and her response to God: that all Christians may be enriched by the blessings she received and shared.

Reflection: Ecumenically, an important step was taken in 2005 with the release of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission's statement of agreement, "Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ". Amongst other things, this called all Christians to recognise the blessings of Mary we all share through our common scriptures:

"The scriptural witness summons all believers in every generation to call Mary 'blessed'; this Jewish woman of humble status, this daughter of Israel living in hope of justice for the poor, whom God has graced and chosen to become the virgin mother of his Son through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit. We are to bless her as the 'handmaid of the Lord' who gave her unqualified assent to the fulfilment of God's saving plan, as the mother who pondered all things in her heart, as the refugee seeking asylum in a foreign land, as the mother pierced by the innocent suffering of her own child, and as the woman to whom Jesus entrusted his friends. We are at one with her and the apostles, as they pray for the outpouring of the Spirit upon the nascent Church, the eschatological family of Christ. And we may even glimpse in her the final destiny of God's people to share in her son's victory over the powers of evil and death."

Sunday 26 March 4th Sunday in Lent

Readings: Job 14.1-14, 1 Peter 4.1-11, Mtt 27.57-66

Pray for: Kokowarra Country, its peoples and needs

Reflection: *"When I think of my totem, "the osprey", it reminds me of Jesus. In my language I call it, "Binga-Tawuun." The word means, "Grey hair Friend". He is my friend till my journey's end. He cares watches helps and provides for me. He is symbolic of Jesus, God with us. Having God and Jesus with us, we have all we need to carry on in this life. As Christians we look for the world to come. (Heb.11.13-16 & 13.14, John 14.1-3)* (Pastor George Rosendale, 'Spirituality of the Exile', Milbi Dabaar)

Monday 27 March

Readings: Acts 10.34-43, Col 3.1-4, Mtt 28.1-10

Pray for: Waaanyi Country, its peoples and needs; and for the Doomadgee Aboriginal Community

Reflection: *Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) National Park is one of Queensland's most scenic national parks lying within Waanyi Country. Situated within the remote north-west Highlands of Queensland, the park features spectacular gorge country and sandstone ranges. Doomadgee was originally known as Dumaji and was located on Bayley Point on the Gulf of Carpentaria. In 1936 after being destroyed by a cyclone the community was relocated to Nicholas River.*

Tuesday 28 March

Readings: Acts 2.14, 22-32; Mtt 28.8-15

Pray for: Kalkadoon Country, its peoples and needs; and especially for Peter Smith and Aboriginal ministry around Mt.Isa.

Reflection: *‘We are living in exciting times, times of change, times of positive change. It is up to us to grasp these opportunities and take our rightful place as leaders within the church... Who would have thought 25 years ago that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people would be carrying out funeral services for our own people, performing house blessings, baptisms, anointing our sick, and celebrating bush prayers, all this being done without a priest, pastor, or minister, but within the church structure.’* (Peter Smith, ‘Our Role in Liturgy, Ministry and Theology’, in *Milbi Dabaar*)

Wednesday 29 March

Readings: Acts 2.36-41, John 20.11-18

Pray for: Guwa Country in western Queensland, its peoples and needs

Reflection: *‘It is our responsibility to teach theology our way, to teach our understanding of God, the creator spirit within the Christian context, and our relationship with God and the land. There will be times when we will have to be strong and perhaps some powers within the church will disagree with us. It will be easy to go along with things the way they are. Any dead fish can float downstream...there may be times when we will have to swim against the current.’* (Peter Smith, ‘Our Role in Liturgy, Ministry and Theology’, in *Milbi Dabaar*)

Thursday 30 March

Readings: Acts 3.1-10, Luke 24.13-35

Pray for: Iningai, Malintji and Kunngkari Countries (central west Queensland), their peoples and needs.

Reflection: *Some of central western Queensland’s most significant Aboriginal art is located at the site, about 70 km east of Aramac, of the Gracevale Caves. Sadly the majesty of the people’s dreaming encountered the brutality of a massacre in the 1870s. The incident is believed to have been sparked by the murder by spearing of a stockman working with surveyors on Aramac Station. The station’s manager Alexander Gordon led a party to track the Aborigines to Gordon’s Cave where they were shot. The death count is not known.*

Friday 31 March

Readings: Acts 3.11-26, Luke 24.35-48

Pray for: Indigenous sportsmen and women.

Reflection: *31 March is the anniversary of two notable events in Indigenous sporting history: in 1883, Bobby Kinnear of Victoria became the first Aboriginal runner to win the Stawell Gift, and, in 1909, George Green became the first Aboriginal to play senior rugby league, playing for Eastern Suburbs.*