

NATSIEC PRAYER CALENDAR SEPTEMBER 2006

Friday Sept. 1 Wattle Day (Orthodox Church beginning of the year)

Readings: 1 Cor 1.17-25; Mtt 25.1-13

Pray for: Care and celebration of God's Creation with all that lives, grows and flowers upon the Earth

Reflection: The Orthodox Church marks today as the beginning of the year, celebrating the good things of Creation. In wider Australian society it also has a connection with God's Creation in being made Wattle Day (with the Golden Wattle proclaimed as the official Australian floral emblem on 1st September 1988, though long before having been the unofficial floral emblem of Australia). Wattles inhabit nearly all parts of the Australian continent and often clothe the countryside with masses of green and bright golden yellow, mainly in springtime. However there is a wattle blossoming gold somewhere in Australia every day of the year.

'The burn-time ceremony, which is held in late winter or early spring, is about new life for all created things. The old grass is burnt, and new grass grows to bring life for people and animals. Women and children are not allowed to go out at night. The God of creation would, they are told, be moving about them to make the grass to grow and to provide meat for the people. He waters the ground, and this is why we see dew on the ground. None but the old men must see him, or they will die. Here passages like Exodus 33 and John 1:18 come to mind.' (Pastor George Rosendale)

Saturday 2 September

Readings: 1 Cor 1.26-31; Mtt 25.14-30

Pray for: a deeper awareness of Christ as the 'firstborn of all creation', in whom 'all things in heaven and on earth were created'; for Dr. Norman Habel and the 'Season of Creation' initiative; and for all who help to nurture Christian sensitivity to the presence and sufferings of Christ in Creation.

Reflection: The Season of Creation is a new initiative, developed by Lutheran pastor and theologian Dr. Norm Habel, out of his concern for God's Earth (a concern significantly nurtured through his long-term involvement with Indigenous Australians and the Reconciliation movement. As Norm writes:

'In the seasons of Advent, Epiphany, Lent and Easter we celebrate the life of Christ. In the season of Pentecost we celebrate the Holy Spirit. Now, in the season of Creation, we have an opportunity to celebrate God, the Creator. For four Sundays in September, prior to St Francis of Assisi Day, we can now join in celebrating with Christ the wonders of creation. In the liturgy, we follow the lead of the psalm writers and celebrate with creation — with the forests, the rivers and the fields, which praise the Creator in their own way. Bible readings focus especially on the story of Earth, which complements the story of God and the story of humanity in the Scriptures. We commit ourselves to a ministry of healing Earth, with Christ and creation as our partners.' (see further www.seasonofcreation.com)

Sunday 3 September Fathers Day

Readings: Song of Songs 2.8-13; James 1.17-27; Mk 7.1-8,14-23

Pray for: All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fathers and all who enable others to develop strong and sensitive fatherhood.

Reflection: *'Aboriginal fathers especially have been over-looked as both a stakeholder group and a resource for Aboriginal children and youth. Previous research by Aboriginal communities working with Jessica Ball found low participation of Aboriginal fathers in infant and early childhood care. Many Aboriginal fathers reported a desire for more involvement, but identified several barriers, including: scheduling conflicts, perceived role ambiguity, and perceived "bias" toward mothers' involvement in infant, child care, and parenting programs and services.'* (Indigenous Fatherhood Project, see further: www.ecdip.org/fathers).

Monday 4 September Fathers Day

Readings: 1 Cor 2.1-5; Lk 4.16-30

Pray for: Catholic EarthCare and other denominational church agencies working for a healing of God's Creation

Reflection: *'it is immediately evident that humanity has disappointed divine expectations ... humiliating ... that 'flower garden' that is the earth, our home...*

It is necessary, therefore, to sustain and stimulate ecological conversion'
(Pope John Paul II)

Tuesday 5 September

Readings: 1 Cor 2.10b-16; Lk 4.31-37

Pray for: the work of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry in Melbourne and Victoria

Reflection: *'What happened to all those people who walked the bridge walks? Did they just fall off the end?'* (Vicki Walker, Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, Melbourne, speaking at the NATSIEC 'Hearts are Burning' events in 2005)

Wednesday 6 September

Readings: 1 Cor 3.1-9; Lk 4.38-44

Pray for: Wurundjeri Country (Melbourne), its people and needs

Reflection: *'Some small parcels of land have been handed back by the churches to Indigenous people since 1986, but so very very little, and often with conditions or qualifications. Again and again the same issues are raised: to whom exactly should we return the land? what will they do with it? etc Thereby the will to just reparations is denied. Yet the challenge of Pope John Paul II's words in 1986 remains - on this and other issues of justice and healing – "what can now be done to remedy the deeds of yesterday must not be put off till tomorrow." '* (Vicki Walker, Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, Melbourne, speaking at the NATSIEC 'Hearts are Burning' events in 2005)

Thursday 7 September

Readings: 1 Cor 3.18-23, Lk 5.1-11

Pray for: the peoples of the Kulin nation (Melbourne region) and their needs

Reflection: *'The basic message I base my performances around is this: To feel happy about yourself, you must feel happy about the place you live in. To feel happy about the place you live in, you must get to know that place. To get to know that place, you must ask the people who have lived there the longest, the Aboriginal people. We have the key that can open the door to the treasures of this land.'* (Boori (Monty) Pryor *Maybe Tomorrow*)

Friday 8 September

Readings: 1 Cor 4.1-5, Lk 5.33-39

Pray for: Wathaurong Country (Geelong region), its people and needs

Reflection: *'The way I feel, the position of Aboriginal people...is like this. Imagine somebody walking into your house and shooting you half a dozen times, in your body, arms, legs, everywhere. Somehow you survive. The ambulance is called and you're whisked away to the hospital and you're put in intensive care with all these tubes coming out of your body, and the machine monitoring your heartbeat is going beep, beep, beep. The next day someone kicks the door open, walks in and says, 'Come on, I'm taking you for a run.' You can barely talk but you say, 'Can't you see I've been shot? I can't run.' Then the person says, 'Well, walk.' And you say, 'But I can't walk.' And the person says, 'You're okay. Come on.' And they drag you off the bed. You fall over but they still drag you. So, there you are, half crawling along the ground, half being dragged by the scruff of your neck. They pull out the tubes. The gaping holes made from all the bullets are weeping blood. There's blood all over the ground.*

You see, that is like us now. We're still suffering from the first slaughter. We have gaping wounds that have never had a chance to heal. They only let us out of the concentration camps (about thirty years ago). We are still bleeding. Our blood is still pouring out, soaking the earth... the government of the day says, 'here's however many million dollars, go and change yourselves.' No race of people on earth could change and adopt a whole other lifestyle just with a click of a finger and some money.' (Boori (Monty) Pryor *Maybe Tomorrow*)

Saturday 9 September

Readings: 1 Cor 4.6-15; Lk 6.1-5

Pray for: Katabanut Country (Cape Otway region), its people and needs

Reflection: *'Maybe tomorrow/ all our eyes, ears and hearts will be as one/
then nunjull the sun/ can shine to warm even the darkest thought/
Maybe tomorrow/ then in this warm light the earth will be seen/
her beauty and power felt/ her tales of creation heard/
through story rocks and sacred waters
Maybe tomorrow/ we will not mine, dig and sift/*

*for the gift/ the earth our mother has to give us
Maybe tomorrow/ the keepers of her secrets will be heard/ word for word/
then our journey can begin together/ our dusty mother will give way/
as we walk and talk/ to retrace the footsteps of time itself/ then
Maybe tomorrow/ we will all sit in the circle of life/
same rhythm/ same time (Boori (Monty) Pryor Maybe Tomorrow)*

Sunday 10 September 14th Sunday after Pentecost

Readings: Prov 22.1-2,8-9,22-23; James 2.1-10 (11-13) 14-17; Mk 7.24-37

Pray for: Gunditjmara Country (south-west Victoria), its people and needs

Reflection: *'Our own immensely strong evangelical tradition has encouraged Aboriginal Christians to remove themselves from the real socio-political life of our people, which we have been taught to call worldly. We call this part of life sinful. It leads us to hellfire! We have been encouraged to believe social issues such as land rights are spiritual, not political questions, and advised that we will get our land rights in heaven. So, instead of reaching towards the abundant life of the Kingdom, we have used our fiery enthusiasm for the evangelism of our people to offer them a narrowly conservative world. In doing so we have lost (or, rather, have never been given opportunity to discover) the truly radical nature of the good news of Jesus Christ our Saviour. This has created a crisis of credibility among our people who are living in "the world" seeking to better the lives of our people. It is a fundamental crisis of faith which arises because we have not yet faced the dilemma of being oppressed. Conversely, we must add, we face the dilemma precisely because our wider church brothers and sisters must still grapple with their own crisis as our oppressors.'* (Charles Harris 'Manifesto')

Monday 11 September

Readings: 1 Cor 5.1-8; Lk 6.6-11

Pray for: Djapwurrung Country (The Wimmera), its people and needs

Reflection: *One of the most important aboriginal rock art sites in this region depicts Bunjil, the traditional creator of the land, and his two dingoes. Bunjil was known as a good spirit who created things as they are today and gave the tribes their law and culture.*

Tuesday 12 September

Readings: 1 Cor 6.1-11; Lk 6.12-19

Pray for: Jardwadjali/Djapwurrung Country (The Grampians area), its people and needs

Reflection: *The fascinating large rock Manja shelter is on the western side of the Grampians. Manja symbolises the link between the Jardwadjali and their land. It is believed that the hand stencils (more than any in any other site in Victoria) were a way of recording a visit to this incredible rock overhang.*

Wednesday 13 September

Readings: 1 Cor 7.25-31; Lk 6.20-26

Pray for: Wotjobaluk/Wergaia Country (Wimmera/Mallee area), its people and needs; and all Indigenous people whose lives and memories have been lost.

Reflection: *The oldest surviving mission buildings in Victoria can be found at Ebenezer Mission, established in Bunyo-budnutt land (Antwerp area) by Moravian missionaries in 1859, and closed in 1904. The first convert to Christianity was a young Aboriginal man called Nathaniel Pepper in 1860. His brother, Phillip Pepper, lies buried in the church cemetery. Both Nathaniel and Phillip, along with many other Aborigines, were baptised by the Moravians, and were allowed to choose their own baptismal names. Yet, although Phillip has a tombstone, almost all of the 150 other Aboriginal people buried at the station do not.*

Thursday 14 September

Readings: 1 Cor 8.1-7 (8-9) 10-13; Lk 6.27-38

Pray for: Latje Latje Country (Mildura area), its people and needs; for the Latje Latje dance group and Indigenosu dancers everywhere

Reflection: *One of the renowned Indigenous dance groups is the Latje Latje Aboriginal Dance Group, founded in 1979, to support and encourage cultural diversity. They are based in the area of Mildura, a name which itself literally means "red earth," in local language.*

Friday 15 September

Readings: 1 Cor 9.16-19 (20-22a) 22b-27; Lk 6.39-42

Pray for: Wemba Wemba/Wati Wati Country (Swan Hill/Kerang) and Yorta Yorta Country, their peoples and needs

Reflection: *One of the most famous of Yorta Yorta people is Jimmy Little, a living legend of music. A man of deep Christian faith, he sings love songs as though they were spirituals, and vice versa. As he has said of just one of his songs - "Surely God is a Lover": 'I wanted to sing that song as a way of saying that God has a sense of humour and a heart of gold. He's human, he's real and he has suffered more than any of us put together. There is so much power in compassion, and I think that is sometimes overlooked.' For Jimmy, music is "the language of love" because it has the potential to transcend everything that distinguishes humans one from another. (Deadly Vibe Aug 2004)*

Saturday 16 September

Readings: 1 Cor 10.14-22; Lk 6.43-49

Pray for: Jaara Jaara & Dja Dja Wrung Country (Bendigo region), its people and needs

Reflection: *The land of the Dja Dja Wrung takes in the catchment area for the Loddon, Campaspe and Avoca Rivers in the Riverine region of central/western Victoria. Bendigo is the largest city in Dja Dja Wrung country but other cities and towns are Wedderburn, Castlemaine, St Arnaud, Maryborough, Boort, Heathcote and Maldon. The two moeity totems of the Jaara people are Bunjil the Eaglehawk and Waang the Crow.*

Sunday 17 September 15th Sunday after Pentecost

Readings: Proverbs 1.20-33; James 2.18-26; Mk 8.27-38

Pray for: Wiradjuri/Duduroa/Yiatmathang Country (Albury/Wodonga & Beechworth regions)

Reflection: *The Yeddondba Aboriginal Art Site, 12 km north of Beechworth at Mount Pilot, was re opened in October 1997 to showcase the artwork of the dominant indigenous clan of the area, the Duduroa. The clan, of around 2000 covered the area south of Wodonga, around Beechworth, and almost to Wangaratta. Mt Pilot was important to the Duduroa, Pangarang, Quat Quatta and Minjambutta clans as a spiritual and ceremonial site and springs located in the rock of the Mt Pilot lookout were an essential water source. The Yeddondba artwork, thought to be over 2000 years old, is of a Thylacine or Tasmanian Tiger, a Goanna and a Snake, the totem spirits of the Duduroa.*

Monday 18 September

Readings: 1 Cor 11.17-26 (27-32) 33; Lk 7.1-10

Pray for: Gunai/Kurnai Country (Gippsland area), its people and needs

Reflection: *Borun (the pelican) and Tuk (the musk duck) are the Dreamtime ancestors of the Gunai people, whose clans include the Bratwoloong, Brayakooloong, Brabuwooloong, Tatungooloong and Krowathunkooloong.*

Tuesday 19 September

Readings: 1 Cor 12.12-14 (15-26) 27-31a

Pray for: UN Millennium Goal 1 – the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger

Reflection: *Target 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day. Target 2: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger*

Wednesday 20 September

Readings: 1 Cor 12.31-13.13; Lk 7.31-35

Pray for: UN Millennium Goal 2 – the achievement of universal primary education

Reflection: *Target 3: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling*

Thursday 21 September St. Matthew International Day of Peace

Readings: 1 Cor 15.1-11; Lk 7.36-50

Pray for: the United Nations and all international agencies working for just peace

Reflection: *The United Nations was born out of the ashes of World War II. One of its main aims was to help make the world a more peaceful place by working for justice and the development of peoples everywhere, as well as working more directly for peace.*

The opening of the regular session of the General Assembly each year has been declared as an International Day of Peace, devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace both within and among nations and peoples.

At the United Nations, the Day is marked with a special ceremony near the Peace Bell. The Bell was cast from coins donated by people from some 60 countries. At 10:00 a.m. local time, the United Nations Secretary-General delivers a special message before ringing the bell and calling upon people throughout the world to reflect for a moment on the universal goal of peace. Following the moment of silence, the President of the Security Council makes a statement on behalf of the members of the Council. During the opening ceremony, at 3:00 p.m. local time, the President of the General Assembly invites the delegates to stand for a minute of silence in observance of the International Day of Peace.

Friday 22 September

Readings: 1 Cor 15.12-20; Lk 8.1-3

Pray for: UN Millennium Goal 3 –
the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women

Reflection: *Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015*

Saturday 23 September

Readings: 1 Cor 15.35-37 (38-41) 42-49; Lk 8.4-15

Pray for: UN Millennium Goal 4 – the reduction of child mortality

Reflection: *Target 5: Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate*

Sunday 24 September Social Justice Sunday

Readings: Proverbs 31:10-31; James 3.1-12; Mk 9. 30-41

Pray for: Indigenous Australia to be placed at the centre of Australian church and wider society concerns so that we can Make *Indigenous* Poverty History.

Reflection: *On this day each year, the Church issues a Social Justice Sunday Statement, reflecting on a social issue of contemporary importance. Together we are encouraged to put Indigenous Australians at the centre of our concerns and to enlarge our commitment to the campaign to Make Indigenous Poverty History.*

Monday 25 September

Readings: Prov 3.27-34; Lk 8.16-18

Pray for: UN Millennium Goal 5 – the improvement of maternal health

Reflection: *Target 6. Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio*

Tuesday 26 September

Readings: Prov 21.1-6 (7-9) 10-13; Lk 8.19-21

Pray for: UN Millennium Goal 6 – the combating of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Reflection: *Target 7: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS .*
Target 8: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

Wednesday 27 September

Readings: Prov 30.5-9; Lk 9.1-6

Pray for: UN Millennium Goal 7 – ensuring environmental sustainability

Reflection: *Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources*
Target 10: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation
Target 11: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

Thursday Sept. 28 Green Consumer Day

Readings: Eccles 1.2-11; Lk 9.7-9

Pray for: responsible use of the earth's resources and for self-discipline to consume according to real need rather than greed.

Reflection: *The problems of consumerism and its impact on the environment are an area of major concern in today's world. This day invites us to become aware of the importance of recycling, reusing*

and reducing. By reducing our consumption of both goods and energy, we reduce the waste and pollution of manufacturing and transporting goods and we conserve landfill space. When we do buy goods, it reduces waste if they are reusable rather than disposable. We are probably already recycling at home. Read the recycling information on product labels and buy from companies that make real efforts to incorporate both pre- and post-consumer recycled materials in their products.

Friday 29 September St. Michael & All Angels

Readings: Dan 7.9-10 & 13-14, Rev 12.7-12a, John 1.45-51

Pray for: the protection of God for all in danger this day,
and for all who are messengers of grace.

Reflection: *The name Michael signifies "Who is like to God?" and was the war cry of the good angels in the battle fought in heaven against Satan and his followers. Scripture describes St. Michael as "one of the chief princes," and leader of the forces of heaven in their triumph over the powers of hell. He has been especially honoured and invoked as patron and protector by the Church from the time of the Apostles. Although he is always called "the Archangel," the Greek Fathers and many others place him over all the angels - as Prince of the Seraphim. St. Michael is the patron of grocers, mariners, paratroopers, police and sickness.*

Saturday 30 September

Readings: Eccles 11.9-12.8; Lk 9.43b-45

Pray for: UN Millennium Goal 8 – the development of a global partnership for development;
and the work of Micah Challenge in Australia

Reflection: *Every Friday at 9am (local time), Micah Challenge Council Members, facilitators and friends around the world join in prayer for the Micah Challenge. A short email containing prayer points, a bible verse and a commentary is circulated each week as a focus for prayer. The commentaries are also building into a valuable resource for the development of presentations, sermons and study material on the themes for the campaign. Micah challenge warmly invites all to join in prayer each Friday at a time each week that suits them. The focus materials for Friday Prayer are posted each week at www.micahchallenge.org.au*