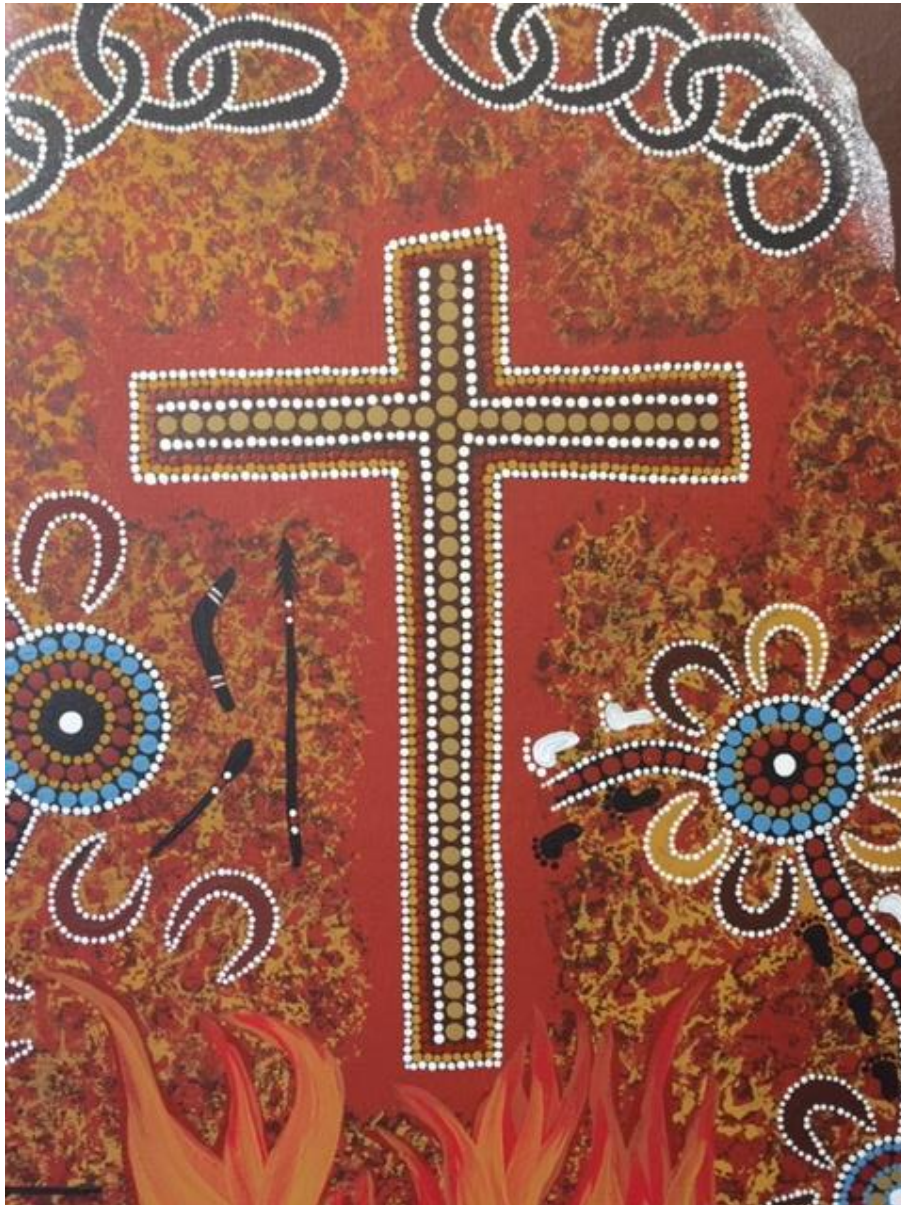


**National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA)
10th National Forum**

Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace – solidarity with our First Nations



Start and End: Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture (ACC&C)

Sunday 23 June, 2019 – 4PM

*Front cover design from "Invasion"
by artist John "Munnari" Hammond A'Hang ©
Presented to the NCCA by Aboriginal and Islander
Participants at the NCCA Inaugural Forum, Canberra 14 July 1994*

'Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage' (Ps84:5)



Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace Station 1

**Mural Wall,
Australian Centre for
Christianity and Culture (ACC&C)**

Gathering Prayer

God of Love,
You are the Creator of this land
and of all good things.
Our hope is in you
because you gave your Son Jesus
to reconcile the world to you.
We pray for your strength and grace
to forgive, accept and love one another,
as you love us
and forgive and accept us
in the sacrifice of your Son.
Amen¹

Acknowledgement of Country *(say altogether)*

We acknowledge the Nugambri and Ngunnawal people, whom God has placed as the original custodians of this place on which we meet. We acknowledge the wisdom of their Elders, both past and present and honour their continuing culture, and pray that we might all work together for reconciliation and justice in this nation.

Introduction to the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace²

We stand here at the **Mural wall**, the starting place for our Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace.

The Mural Wall represents a painting depicting the Holy Spirit in Our Land by the late renowned Elder, Lawman and painter of the Gija People (East Kimberley), Hector Jandany. This Mural Wall wonderfully bridges Indigenous and Christian

¹ Prepared by Wontulp Bi-Buya Indigenous Theology Working Group, NATSICC 2003

² Come and See, A Theological Invitation to the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, World Council of Churches Commission on Faith and Order.

spirituality through an interpretation of life of the Spirit in the land and the lives of its people.

Pilgrimages are transformative journeys that are ultimately directed toward the reign of God and involve responding to God's calling and promises by journeying toward a sacred place. .

Journey and pilgrimage are found at the heart of the scriptures.

Generally it is a difficult journey to an unknown destination, one that is sustained by hope of renewal and liberation.

Pilgrims on their way are moving - lightly as they learn that only the essential and necessary counts.

As pilgrims, we are open for surprises and ready to be transformed by encounters and challenges on the way.

Everyone who will walk with us with an open heart and mind will be a welcome companion (companion?) ("the ones we share our bread with") on the way.

The pilgrimage promises to be a transformative journey, discovering ourselves anew in new relationships of justice and peace.

This pilgrimage will consist of three different **dimensions** – not in a linear but much more in a dynamic, interdependent understanding:

- **Celebrating the Gifts (*via positiva*)**

We do not journey with empty hands, nor do we walk alone. The "original blessing" of being created in the image of God and together – as a fellowship – we are a unique part of the wider web of life, which amazes us. Together we celebrate God's great gift of life, the beauty of creation and the unity of a reconciled diversity. We feel empowered by this grace of participating in God's movement of love, justice and peace. – We receive in prayer.

- **Visiting the Wounds (*via negativa*)**

This pilgrimage will lead us to the locations of ugly violence and injustices. We intend to look for God's incarnated presence in the midst of suffering, exclusion, and discrimination. The true encounter with real, contextual experiences of a broken creation and sinful behaviour against each other might inform us anew about the essence of life itself. It might lead us to repentance and – in a movement of purification – liberate us from obsession with power, possessions, ego, and violence, so that we become ever more Christ-like. – We listen in prayer.

- **Transforming the Injustices (*via transformativa*)**

This pilgrimage will lead us to the locations of ugly violence and injustices. We intend to look for God's incarnated presence in the midst of suffering, exclusion, and discrimination. The true encounter with real, contextual experiences of a broken creation and sinful behaviour against each other might inform us anew about the essence of life itself. It might lead us to repentance and – in a movement of purification – liberate us from obsession with power, possessions, ego, and violence, so that we become ever more Christ-like. – We listen in prayer.

We believe that the Lord's Prayer will help, guide, and lead us on our common journey.

As we move together and face the challenges of the journey, as pilgrims may we be opened unexpectedly to new experiences of the holy and be renewed in heart and mind.

Closing Prayer

As we embark on this pilgrimage together let us pray together:

O gracious God, we give thanks to you from our innermost heart that you led our ways with your guidance and accompaniment along our journey of Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace.

Lord, we believe your word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.

Thank you that we travelled in your light and walked in your truth.

May the things that you have revealed and thoughts that we share in this pilgrimage dwell in our hearts and stir us to action.

AMEN

Please follow the Pilgrimage ushers to the next stop.

Walk at a steady pace and be careful when crossing the road.

The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace is not ultimately directed to a particular holy place but rather toward the fulfilment of the reign of God.



Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace

Station 2

High Court of Australia

Parks Place, Forrest

Opening Prayer

Prayer for this Land Australia Creator God,

We pray for this land, our culture, our customs,
our languages, our people and our nation.

Gather us together to look after for this land,
so that the beauty of our mother earth
may be preserved for all future generations.

Jesus our brother, give us your grace,
To be united in one mind, one heart, and in one
action so that we can continue the journey of reconciliation,
to solve the divisions of our growth
and enable all Australians to work together
in love, peace and joy. We ask you God the Holy Spirit,
Overshadow us with your presence
Especially this our nation.

We ask you to guide all people whether black, white or
yellow so we can truly learn and have better understanding
in the knowledge of language and
culture of this land Australia

Amen³

³ © 2012 Bishop Saibo Mabo Chairperson NATSIEC

Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace - Station Description

Here we stop outside the **High Court of Australia**, the site of the Mabo and the Wik decisions.

The Mabo decision was a watershed moment in Australia's history. In a long awaited decision, the High Court rejected the doctrine of terra nullius and recognised the prior occupation and continuing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to their land.

The Native Title Act was enacted in 1993. It attempted to clarify the legal position of landholders and the process for claiming, protecting and recognising native title in the courts. The Act was amended in 1998 by the Howard Government to provide security of tenure to non-Indigenous holders of pastoral leases and place further restrictions on native title.

Today, native title parties continue to make applications, reach agreements, and seek remedies to past injustice.

Reflection on the station

We Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples believe that the Creator has always been with our people since the beginning of time. Our connection to this land Australia and the stories from long ago emphasise this and reveals to us our ongoing relationship to the Creator. We know that the Spirit is always close to us and within us. The Spirits of our ancestors are always around us looking out for us and showing us the path we should travel. We are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses.

Reflection Prayer

As a Minority we stand as the strength of this Land.

We affirm our belief in the Creator Spirit who created us.

It is in our connection to this deep sense of belonging that our Identity lives.

Our Culture can never be broken.

We embrace our past.

We are alive in the present and have hope in the future.

The Creator Spirit calls us into a search for a deeper relationship with himself and each other.

The Creator Spirit calls us to renewal⁴.

⁴ (NATSIEC Commissioners paper 'We are what we are: Spirit People' 2003).

Prayer of Confession

Leader: Merciful God, we acknowledge and lament the injustice and abuse that has so often marked the treatment of First peoples in this land.

Voice 1: We acknowledge and lament the way in which their land was taken from them and their language, culture, law and spirituality despised and suppressed.

Leader: We acknowledge and lament that in our own time the injustice and abuse has continued.

Voice 2: We have been indifferent when we should have been outraged, we have been apathetic when we should have been active, we have been silent when we should have spoken out.

Leader: Gracious God, hear our acknowledgements — All we have not loved you with our whole heart, nor have we loved First Peoples and other neighbours as ourselves.

Voice 2: Liberating Jesus, hear our lament and confession,

Leader: and through your Spirit bring healing, hope and transformation to the lives of our First Nations sisters and brothers and their communities, we pray.

All: **By your Spirit transform our minds and hearts so that we may love as you have loved us, that we may boldly speak your truth and courageously do your will. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

Please sing together the Taize chant as we move to the next station:

O Lord hear my Prayer © Taize Community

O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer; When I call answer me.

O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer; Come and listen to me.

Please follow the Pilgrimage ushers to the next stop.

Walk at a steady place and be careful when crossing the road.

The peace that Christians proclaim is the peace of Christ, 'the peace which passes all understanding' (Phil. 4:7)



Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace

Station 3

Reconciliation Place

King Edward Terrace

Opening Prayer - Your Reconciling Arms

Holy God, of holy dreaming,

Through your breath of life you bring creation into being.

You shape the myriad forms and features of this land, and form its rainbow of many colours, cultures and peoples.

Through your redeeming love you give us peace in Jesus Christ, your only Son, our Lord.

You reconcile us together in one body by the Cross, giving us grace for our journey of healing.

Through your Holy Spirit you enable us to grow and to flourish in your service.

You bring forth fruits of love and grains of joy.

In this week of prayer for reconciliation, help us we pray, to prune back all which brings destruction, and to turn to your renewing springs: that we may seek you in all we meet, and cultivate a culture of peace.

Holy God, of holy dreaming, breath through us, and in your mercy hear our prayer.

Holy God, of holy journeying, you travel with us through darkness and despair.

Hear our prayer for your children, here and elsewhere, caught up in the violence of our world.

You call us to move out beyond our boundaries, to walk with others in their journeys, sharing your Spirit of reconciliation.

Breathe your Holy Spirit upon us, we pray, and open our hearts to your presence, and journey onward in the freedom of your love.

Encircle us with your peace, enfold us in your reconciling arms, and enlarge the circles of our love.

Amen⁵

Reflection on the station

Here we stand in Reconciliation Place, in the middle of the Parliamentary Zone.

This location places the Reconciliation Place in the Parliamentary Zone, places the Reconciliation process physically and symbolically at the heart of Australia's democratic life and institutions.

Reconciliation Place is constructed on the traditional land of the Ngunnawal people.

Reconciliation Place reaffirms Australia's shared history and commitment to Reconciliation as an important national priority.

Reconciliation is a process where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, non-Indigenous Australians and Australian governments forge a new relationship based on mutual understanding, recognition and respect.

Let us Pray ⁶

God of love and justice, we pray that our political, religious and community leaders act in the interests of all the people in this land... that they walk the talk of reconciliation.

Lord, Hear Us

ALL: Lord, come walk with us towards justice, peace and reconciliation

⁵ *Prayer by Rev. Dr. Jonathan Inkpin used at the national release of the Decade to Overcome Violence, adapted with permission from the author. Published in Holy Ground, (2005) ed. Paynter and Boothroyd, Willow Connection.

⁶ Catholic Aboriginal Ministries - <https://www.cam.org.au/acmv/Reconciliation-Week>

God of love and justice, we pray for those who still suffer sadness because of the government policies of the past ... may they be healed by us walking the talk of your Gospel command to love.
Lord Hear Us

ALL: Lord, come walk with us towards justice, peace and reconciliation

God of love and justice, we pray for those who are ostracized because they walk the talk of reconciliation. May our nation encourage and celebrate their work.
Lord Hear Us

ALL: Lord, come walk with us towards justice, peace and reconciliation

God of Love and justice, help us to learn the message of justice taught by Pope Francis who has instructed us to go out. Go out and share... go out and interact with our brothers and sisters, go out and share, go out and ask. Become your Word in body as well as spirit.

ALL: Lord, come walk with us towards justice, peace and reconciliation

Before moving from Reconciliation Place, spend some time reading and reflecting on the exhibition.

Please sing together the Taize chant as we move to the next station:

Veni Sancte Spiritus © Br Michael Herry fms

Veni Sancte Spiritus Veni Sancte Spiritus

Veni Sancte Spiritus Veni Sancte Spiritus (Come, Holy Spirit)

Please follow the Pilgrimage ushers to the next stop.

Walk at a steady pace and be careful when crossing the road.

The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace invites our churches to offer together, even now, their shared willingness to be open to the new ways in which the Spirit is responding to the petition which countless Christians around the world pray each day: 'Thy will be done'.



Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace

Station 4

Australian Tent Embassy

Reflection on the station

As we stand here, in the shadow of the Old and New Parliament House and around the fire at the tent embassy, let us remember and commit ourselves to work together for Voice, Treaty and Truth for our First Nations People.

We stand here on Ngambri and Ngunnawal land

Let us hear the words of the Uluru statement....

We, gathered at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention, coming from all points of the southern sky, make this statement from the heart: Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands, and possessed it under our own laws and customs. This our ancestors did, according to the reckoning of our culture, from the Creation, according to the common law from 'time immemorial', and according to science more than 60,000 years ago. This sovereignty is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or 'mother nature', and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty. It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown. How could it be otherwise? That peoples possessed a land for sixty millennia and this sacred link disappears from world history in merely the last two hundred years? With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia's nationhood. Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future. These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. This is the torment of our

powerlessness. We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a rightful place in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country. We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution. Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: the coming together after a struggle. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination. We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history. In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

- **Poverty Pole Charter Prayer**

Let us make a personal commitment to remember a true history of our Nation and remember all those who have gone before.

We need to make a commitment to ensure that the future is different; one which recognises that it is up to each of us to create change.

Let us now pray together...

Remember

I remember that this country that we now call Australia always was and always will be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land.

I remember that this country, home to many Indigenous nations since the beginning of time, was colonized in 1788 and I remember all those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples who have lost their lives since.

I remember all those that have gone before, defending Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lands, waterways and cultures.

I remember all those who were taken away from their families and from their ancestral home lands.

I remember with sorrow the lost languages, the lost tribal laws and the desecrated sacred sites.

Recognize

I recognize the richness and diversity of cultures and experiences amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

I recognize and celebrate the unique place in Australia that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples hold as the Traditional Owners and custodians of this land.

I recognize that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples of Australia continue to suffer injustices.

I recognize that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are living in poverty.

I recognize that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples continue to suffer from colonization, exclusion and disempowerment.

I recognize that it takes effort and will from everybody - from governments to individuals, from Indigenous and non – Indigenous alike, to change the situation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

I recognize that unless we unite, with a common will, a poverty of spirit will afflict the entire nation.

Rectify

I commit to taking action to address the disadvantage and exclusion suffered by so many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

I commit to holding my elected representatives, and other leaders, accountable to achieving these goals.

I take personal responsibility to understand the causes and effects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' disadvantage and also to inform people when I encounter ignorance or lack of compassion.

I commit to justice for all.

Closing Statement about the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace – solidarity with our First Nations

As we continue together the pilgrimage of justice, peace and reconciliation;

together as pilgrims;

together as Christians;

together as churches

and together as First and Second People;

Let us say together the Lord's Prayer

Please follow the Pilgrimage ushers back to the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture.

Walk at a steady pace and be careful when crossing the road.

Why a pilgrimage of justice and peace?

Christians and their communities around the world are aware today, as never before, that life itself is in peril. So many dangers — climate change, certainly: but also poverty and economic injustice, threats to health and well-being, violence and war — endanger humanity and can drain our hope. Yet precisely for that reason, the shared faith and commitment of Christians everywhere are necessary, affirming the God of life and the resilient hope offered to us in the life, the cross, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christians are called to affirm, sustain, and protect life.

This is an ecumenical calling. One God of life, one creation, one humanity call the one church of Jesus Christ to commitment and engagement where peace and justice are threatened or destroyed.

That is why the World Council of Churches, an expression of the worldwide Christian fellowship, calls on churches everywhere to walk together, to view their common life, their journey of faith, as a part of the pilgrimage of justice and peace, and to join together with others in celebrating life and in concrete steps toward transforming injustices and violence.

Together we continue to pray : “God of life, lead us to justice and peace,” the prayer of the WCC assembly in Busan, 2013.

Why a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace – solidarity with our First Nations?

The National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) is committed to gathering together in pilgrimage those Churches and Christian communities which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and commit themselves

- (i) to deepen their relationship with each other in order to express more visibly the unity willed by Christ for his Church, and
- (ii) to work together toward the fulfilment of their mission of common witness, proclamation and service,

to the glory of One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

NCCA continues to be committed to the churches working together for justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, and for the healing of our peoples.



'Living and Walking in the Holy Spirit: Called to Transforming Discipleship'

National Council of Churches in Australia 10th National Forum

21-24 June 2019

Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, 15 Blackall Street, Barton ACT



NCCA Mantle



National Council of
Churches in Australia