



THE BRIDGE

A RESOURCE FOR AUSTRALIAN CATHOLICS
STRIVING TO SHARE THEIR FAITH
JULY 2019

Peace to this house and all who dwell within.
From Luke 10:1-12

Theme for 2019 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday



PROUDLY
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LIDCOMBE CATHOLIC CLUB

PRAYER FOR EVANGELISATION PRAYER FOR RECONCILIATION

God of all creation,
as we journey together in this Great Southern Land,
we pray for healing, forgiveness and unity,
creating a path of good will, with justice and compassion.
Jesus, through the power of your love,
you have given us the courage, wisdom and strength
to share our gifts and talents in humility.
In peace and understanding we reconcile with each other.
Creator Spirit, we come together in prayer and thanksgiving for the many
blessings we have received.

Allow your Spirit to wash over us and give us strength to walk together
as one.

*This prayer was written by a small group of Aboriginal Elder women and
Reconciliation Church staff members in 2014.*

**FROM 2019 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER
SUNDAY RESOURCES, P.20.**

EXCELLENT PARISH RESOURCE – JUST RELEASED Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

Five of our Bishops speak eloquently of the gifts of our First
Nation Peoples, their needs, and our role as Catholics in this
5 min 41 secs video

www.youtube.com/watch?v=TkmyZawfk3U&feature=youtu.be



**National Centre
for Evangelisation**
(02) 6201 9833
info@nce.catholic.org.au
nce.catholic.org.au
[facebook.com/groups/
AgentsofEvangelisationNetwork](https://facebook.com/groups/AgentsofEvangelisationNetwork)



Catholic Enquiry Centre
Reaching out in faith
1300 432 484
catholicenquiry.com
facebook.com/CatholicEnquiryCentre

THE NCE IS AN AGENCY OF THE AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE
THE CATHOLIC ENQUIRY CENTRE IS A WORK OF THE NCE

COVER IMAGE: Official image for 2019 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday:
www.natsicc.org.au/assets/final_web2019.pdf

Artist: Queenie McKenzie – of Warmun Community
Title: 'People talking to Jesus in the Bough Shed' – 1995
From the Christof Collection of the Diocese of Broome

VOL 1 No.5 JULY 2019 ISSN 2209-7287
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AGENTS OF EVANGELISATION INTO THE HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS – LUKE 14:22



Sisters gathered at Bruny Island 'where
it all began' 75 years ago

**EACH CHRISTIAN AND EVERY
COMMUNITY MUST DISCERN
THE PATH THAT THE LORD
POINTS OUT.**

**POPE FRANCIS, THE JOY OF THE
GOSPEL, PARAGRAPH 20**

At the age of 18 Margaret Windsham, "yearning to reach isolated
country people" as she puts it, left her family in suburban Townsville,
Queensland, and travelled to Hobart, Tasmania, to train for three years
and then spend her life working with others in mission. The community
she joined had begun 11 years earlier after a young priest, Fr John
Wallis, on visiting a family on Bruny Island, south of Hobart, was
challenged by a mother's cry: "Why can't we have sisters to help us....
Does no one care about us people of the bush?"

This new community of religious Sisters went "into the highways and
byways", as they put it, seeking out people of the bush and in many
other places where people's lives were isolated from community and
opportunity. They visited rural and remote areas, spending weeks
and sometimes years in parishes, offering and receiving hospitality –
welcome, friendship, meals, care. From a mining town on the West Coast
of Tasmania, to outback South Australia and Queensland, sometimes
staying in church sacristies or halls, travelling by car and caravan.

"We were constantly challenged to develop deep, inner resources,
to live creatively and to respond to situations and make decisions,"
says Stancea Vichie MSS, their Congregational Leader. She describes
evangelisation as "being with people in their lives, no matter who they
are or where they are – especially reaching out to the forgotten people."

Their work continues through '**Highways and Byways – a Community
of Service**' an organisation that brings together people – a Board, staff,
Patrons, Partners – committed to the vision and mission of the Sisters.
Funding from the wider community finances 'Small Grants' for projects
for disadvantaged rural communities.

See www.highwaysandbyways.org.au



Celebrating 75 years of service, a commemorative
recipe book '**Food for the Highways and Byways**'
tells their story and provides recipes from the Sisters'
experiences of hospitality.

See www.missionarysisters.org.au for the book and
anniversary events.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

CONTEMPLATING TRADITION



THE SAME HOLY SPIRIT THAT INSPIRED THE SCRIPTURES IS AT WORK IN THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY, AND PROMISES TO LEAD THAT COMMUNITY TO ALL TRUTH (JOHN 16:13)

The question of Catholics and 'Tradition' has come up in a variety of contexts for me over the years. Most recently it was at a three-day meeting of the Plenary Council Executive, convened to contemplate and discuss the various submissions that had been received in preparation for the pending Plenary Council.

I am not in a position to reveal what arose as we listened, discussed, debated and prayed over those three days in May, except to point you in the direction of the various themes that, by the time you read this, will have been promulgated (see www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au). But I can say that, while engaged in the meeting, I found myself thinking about this two-part question: what is Tradition in the Catholic context, and how should we relate to it? It is an important question, as it impacts on which sources we reference in our individual and collective search for truth and authenticity, and, as a result, on our mission of inviting others into the faith, and on something like a Plenary Council.

Held in balance with Scripture as a primary source of truth, Tradition is grounded in the same theological reality that grounds the Scriptures. That is to say, the same Holy Spirit that inspired the Scriptures is at work in the Christian community, and promises to lead that community to all truth (John 16:13), through that which is accepted by the community as authoritative teaching.

The follow quotation is helpful:

Tradition is what is revealed by God and handed on by the apostles, including those things not explicitly recorded in Scripture. 'Tradition' comes from the Latin *tradere*, which means 'to hand on'. [It has its

origins in the fact that] the disciples taught before they wrote, and this oral teaching remained authoritative alongside written Scripture" (see www.catholicfaith.org.uk/Home/Catholic-Faith/The-Church-the-Meaning-of-our-lives/Scripture-Tradition). See also *Catechism*, 77 – 78.

This is not to undermine the significance of Scripture. In fact, it is to honour what Scripture itself teaches on the matter. For example, in his second letter to the Thessalonians (2:15) St Paul writes:

'So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter'.

That is to say, it was not St Paul's belief that his only teaching worth preserving could be found in his letters.

The apostle John echoes the same point:

'There are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written' (John 21:25).

In all this we need to understand what we DON'T mean by Tradition: it is not the collective history of our particular ways of doing things. The very fact that we may have done something for a long time does not give it the status of Tradition. As one source notes: We often write Tradition, with a capital 'T', to mean Sacred Tradition. This Catholic Tradition is different from those traditions (small 't') that are merely customs, and which are not part of Divine Revelation. www.beginningcatholic.com/catholic-tradition

The impact on the Plenary Council, and on our own baptismal mission, should be obvious. We must learn to increasingly read and love the Scriptures. However, we attend to this alongside the authentic wisdom that has been handed down to us through the centuries, arrived at as our spiritual ancestors looked to the Holy Spirit to guide them as they sought to live by and understand the faith they had received. Tradition, wrote G.K. Chesterton, is 'the democracy of the dead'. It gives them a say in how we live today, and is a sure guide as we live our faith in whatever situation we find ourselves.

Of course, there is much more to be said. For those of you on our closed Facebook group, you may like to get on with any thoughts or questions you might have. Let's not be afraid to engage with one another as we seek to find what God is asking of us as individuals and as a community.



SHANE DWYER
Director
National Centre for Evangelisation
Catholic Enquiry Centre
director@nce.catholic.org.au

MISSION PROJECTS

CATHOLIC ENQUIRY CENTRE



In May our small team had the opportunity to attend the Catholic Mission conference held in Sydney. It was a gathering of 400+ people from all walks of Catholic life who came together to be inspired by great faith sharers, and to participate in beautiful liturgies, workshops and seminars.

The Catholic Enquiry Centre (CEC) was able to setup a table with our resources and speak to people about the work we do. A number of

the older participants spoke fondly of their memories of the CEC when it was located in Maroubra, and were pleased to see it still operated. For the younger participants, and those who had migrated to Australia in recent years, we were able to explain to them both the work of the CEC and the National Centre for Evangelisation.

At one stage during the Conference I was sitting in the auditorium participating in one of the liturgies. I realise I should have had my head down and been in deep prayer, but I was distracted and found myself looking around the room at all the faces. What a mixed bunch we were: different ages, ethnic backgrounds, priests, religious, lay, men, women and so on. I thought, 'My God, why are we all here? What difference can we make? And, what are you calling *me* to do?'

I'm sorry to say there were no bolts of lightning, or some sudden rush of answers to all my questions. But what I did realise was that God had given me some space to think about how I might best serve him. What a blessing! So, if it's okay with you, I will offer a prayer for all of you who read *The Bridge* that you too may find some space in the coming week to sit silently and to listen to what God might be calling you to do.



SHARON BREWER
Mission Projects Manager
Catholic Enquiry Centre
mission@nce.catholic.org.au

INSPIRATION

NUTS AND BOLTS



Brought up in a Catholic family in Adelaide, Craig Arthur saw communities in poverty with intergenerational trauma in far-away Port Augusta; his Polish grandmother had also made him aware of the troubles minorities face. Together with his Catholic family and schooling, these experiences led Craig to

want to contribute to the wellbeing of others and alleviate need that was not otherwise met.

So, unlike most young people who, straight from school, decide to go to university for a general degree, Craig chose a highly focused course: Aboriginal Affairs Administration. This unique program would lead him through archaeology, anthropology, and administration, and teach him to work with people.

Soon he was working with the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry in Adelaide (almost every State has one), and then with the national body, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council (NATSICC) as its National Administrator. Today he works for its 10 Councillors each of whom is elected to represent their State or Territory.

As the Council's only full-time paid employee he works in a "front desk job", yet behind the scenes, supporting the Councillors by coordinating retreats, gathering liturgical and teaching resources for schools and parishes, providing cross cultural courses online, writing submissions to government agencies, and facilitating communication with Bishops. He tries to engage and understand people, appreciating that the closer you are to issues the better you can solve them, rather than working from the top down.

He describes his work as like being in a boat: everyone is going in the same direction, with Craig looking after the nuts and bolts in the engine room and the NATSICC Councillors providing the direction. He strives to do his job in a quiet and understanding way, going under the radar, to support people on their journeys: "I do receive the gift of culture with humility. I emphasise humility ... not being overbearing in trying to look after the day to day operations of the council."

After starting in 2002 he had no idea he would still be in this job in 2019; his friends have climbed the corporate ladder, but he wants to stay:

"I am absolutely blessed to work with NATSICC. To be able to work with leaders who are so selfless and giving energises you, so I use my skills to support the Council reach its goals."

In spite of the challenges he witnesses First Nations Peoples face, Craig continues to see God at work. "Spirituality is the core of their being ... beauty and dignity are the gifts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture," he reflects. He has come to understand that culture, family, and spirituality (or 'faith') are the three tenets of Traditional life. He observes they remain firmly in place. "I admire the resilience in the face of the challenges that come from Australian society", he says as he keenly points out that the current number of 130,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics is growing at a rate of 7% each year.

Craig confesses he learnt the theory at school at Gleeson College. Now, out in the world, he has seen God 'on the front line' when people come in for a meal or coffee, encountering Jesus as he sees people who have the least give the most of material things, friendship, and moral support. He sees "rays of beauty in the individual ... God at work in people's lives, in the streets and not just in the Church." This echoes Archbishop James Gleeson's words in a letter to his school: "to grow in deep reverence for the dignity of every person ... as brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ ... reach out to those who suffer and are in need of any kind."

For Craig, evangelisation means living his life to Gospel values and imparting those values to his own young children so they treat people fairly and respectfully.

He affirms: "There's more similarities than differences when you get to know each other – once you know that, you are more ready to engage, understand and empathise."

HOW DO I SHARE MY FAITH? WITH ATHEISTS



THE GOSPEL IS OUR PROGRAM OF LIFE. IT TEACHES US THAT QUESTIONS AREN'T ADDRESSED WITH A READY RECIPE AND THAT THE FAITH ISN'T A SCHEDULE, BUT A 'WAY' (ACTS 9:2).

**POPE FRANCIS, HOMILY
23 MAY, 2019**

- When someone tells you that they are an atheist, ask them what they mean by that. You might find some points of agreement. For example, you also might not believe God is some old man in the sky dealing out punishment at whim.
- Share (with humility – don't 'tell') that Christians experience God in moments of silent reflection in nature (beach, wilderness, the garden) and in love for God is love. For these reasons Christians think that everyone meets God on a daily basis.
- Know your facts. Here we enter the area of 'apologetics'. By this, we don't mean apologising for the faith! Rather, it's about defending the Catholic faith. If you would like to become a bit more confident about the faith, start by reading through the material on our website www.catholicenquiry.com
- Be prepared that sharing your faith with an atheist could be a long commitment. You may have all the eloquent words and knowledge, but in the end, your personal integrity, trustworthiness and other good virtues will be what counts.
- Atheists are often surprised when Christians speak openly of their spiritual experiences and on-going relationship with God. It disarms their notions that Christianity is merely an inherited cultural practice or value system. Ensure your daily connection with God remains open, honest and vital so that you're sensitive to the Holy Spirit's promptings in your encounters with others.
- Pray for atheists. In the end, conversion of heart is God's call and a person's response. We are called to share our faith and pray for the conversion of souls.

LITURGY AND FORMATION



LIVING LITURGY

A Publication of the Catholic Diocese of Sale, Victoria, Australia (free to parishes and schools within the Diocese of Sale)

For individuals and parishes/schools outside the Diocese of Sale, Living Liturgy subscriptions are:

Individual \$50 p.a. or Parish/School \$80 p.a.

A sample issue is on our website:

www.sale.catholic.org.au/liturgy/living-liturgy.html

For enquiries or to subscribe please contact:

Mrs Sophy Morley, Editor

Diocesan Pastoral Coordinator
PO Box 1410, Warragul VIC 3820
(03) 5622 6677

somorley@sale.catholic.org.au



FAMILY PRAYER PLACE MATS

Helping families pray together at meal times

Sale Diocese's prayer placemats have been revamped with a fresh new look. With a double-sided design, the placemats feature traditional and contemporary prayers before meals.

They are laminated and therefore can be easily wiped clean after meals. The placemats are an ideal way of introducing simple prayers to children.

A perfect gift for families, birthday gifts, grandchildren, students commencing kindergarten or school or preparing for Sacraments of Initiation. Only \$2 per mat.

To order:

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EVENTS



menALIVE for Christ (MAX) is an annual gathering of men from across Australia and New Zealand who seek to be encouraged by one another in their faith journey as real men of God.

The weekend is facilitated by menALIVE, a National Catholic Ministry to Men. Each man is challenged to explore how he will respond to God who calls us to ask the big questions within our own spiritual lives as well as within the life of the Church.

Brisbane: 12-14 July, UQ Campus

Sydney: 19-21 July, Benedict XVI Retreat Centre

About menALIVE www.menalive.org.au

To register: max19@menalive.org.au

Contact a member of the team:

Peter Carrigan – 0404 496 405

Robert Falzon – 0412 745 734



MARIAN PROCESSION & YOUTH PILGRIMAGE

Sunday, 27 October, 2019

St Clement's Retreat and Conference Centre
Galong, NSW

A Multicultural family day of prayer and festivities

9.30am Youth Pilgrimage

10.30am Sacrament of Penance

11.30am Mass with main celebrant Archbishop Prowse

12.30pm Multicultural lunch

2.00pm Procession to the grotto

Would pilgrims bring food for the day, an umbrella for shade and a chair.

Contact (02) 6239 8500 or www.marianprocession.org.au



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC YOUTH FESTIVAL, PERTH

If you're looking for a great Christmas gift for a young person why not gift them with a ticket to this great youth event? If you're a member of a PPC why not sponsor a young person to attend this festival – invest in the future! Visit www.youthfestival.catholic.org.au

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS



2019 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SUNDAY RESOURCES

These resources have been designed by the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council to inspire and assist Parishes and Schools to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday. As well:

- Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country Ceremonies
- Suggestions for Acknowledgements
- NATSICC Acknowledgement Plaque endorsed by our Bishops for use in parishes, schools, and other organisations.
- Tribute to Deacon Boniface Perdjert, first permanent deacon in Australia.



**OUR MOB, GOD'S STORY
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Artists
Share their Faith**

An art book with more than 115 works in an exciting variety of styles and stories by over 65 established and emerging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. These artists are from communities, towns and cities across Australia, sharing their faith in over one hundred paintings inspired by Bible verses and stories, many well-loved, others not so well known, from Creation to the Crucifixion.

Available from:

www.biblesociety.org.au/publishing/our-mob-god-s-story



NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CATHOLIC COUNCIL

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council (NATSICC) is the peak advisory body to the Australian Catholic Bishops on issues relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics. The council was founded in 1992 and the Secretariat is based in Adelaide.

Each State and Territory nominates a representative via their local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Ministry.

See www.natsicc.org.au/your-state-territory.html