



# Prayer Resources

Sorry Day 26th May 2011

Week of Prayer for Reconciliation  
27th May—3rd June 2011

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait  
Islander Ecumenical Commission

## Sorry Day and Week of Prayer for Reconciliation

### May 26<sup>th</sup> – Sorry Day

**Reading: John 15: 9-11** – *Remain in my love that your joy may be increased.*

**Pray for:** Members of the Stolen Generations that they may receive justice.

**'SORRY. Still Living On Borrowed Time!'**

***The Stolen Generations are the survivors of past government policies that allowed for the forcible removal of Indigenous children from their families. On 13 February 2008, thousands of Australians shared in the experience of the National Apology to the Stolen Generations and Indigenous Australia delivered by former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd together with the Australian Parliament.***

***The majority of Stolen Generations survivors are over the age of 45 and, despite the Apology, are still waiting for justice – in particular the comprehensive implementation of the recommendations of the 1997 Bringing them home report. It is now 2011 and time is running out; hence the theme 'SORRY. Still Living On Borrowed Time!'*** National Sorry Day Committee  
[www.nsd.org.au](http://www.nsd.org.au)

### Prayer for Australia

God of holy Dreaming, Great Creator Spirit,  
from the dawn of creation you have given your  
children the good things of Mother Earth.  
You spoke and the gum tree grew.  
In the vast desert and dense forest,  
and in cities at the water's edge,  
Creation sings your praise.  
Your presence endures as the rock at the heart of our Land.  
When Jesus hung on the tree  
you heard the cries of all your people



and became one with your wounded ones:  
the convicts, the hunted, and the dispossessed.  
The sunrise of your Son coloured the earth anew,  
and bathed it in glorious hope.  
In Jesus we have been reconciled to you,  
to each other and to your whole creation.  
Lead us on, Great Spirit,  
As we gather from the four corners of the earth;  
Enable us to walk together in trust  
from the hurt of the past  
into the full day which has dawned in Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

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## Week of Prayer for Reconciliation

### “Let’s Talk Recognition”

Each week between the 27<sup>th</sup> May and the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June members of all faith communities across Australia offer prayers for reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. This week is a time for us to renew our commitment to working together in partnership for justice and the healing of relationships. The Week of Prayer runs concurrently with National Reconciliation week.

The week is framed by two key events in Australia’s history which provide strong symbols of the aspirations for reconciliation.

May 27<sup>th</sup> marks the anniversary of Australia’s most successful referendum and a defining event in our nation’s history. The 1967 Referendum saw over 90 per cent of Australians vote to give the Commonwealth the power to make laws for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and *recognise* them in the national census .

On 3 June, 1992, the High Court of Australia delivered its landmark Mabo decision which legally *recognised* that Indigenous people had a special relationship to the land —that existed prior to colonization and still exists today. This *recognition* paved the way for Indigenous land rights called Native Title.

From Reconciliation Australia [www.reconciliation.org.au/](http://www.reconciliation.org.au/)

## Week of Prayer for Reconciliation

**Pray for:** The Journey of Healing

### **Reflection:**

The theme for this year’s National Reconciliation week is “let’s talk recognition”. This theme brings to mind the call from NATSIEC, as part of its **Make Indigenous Poverty Campaign**, to Remember, Recognise and Reflect.



In doing so we were asking people to make a personal commitment to end Indigenous poverty. Most importantly to recognize that each and every one of us has a role to play, no matter how small, to achieve justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and to help heal our relationships. We need to not only recognize the richness and diversity of the First Nation's cultures in this land, but we also need to remember the past.

We need to remember a true history of our Nation and remember all those who have gone before. Finally, we need to make a commitment to ensure that the future is different; one which recognises that it is up to each and every one of us to create change.

The following is adapted from the "Poverty Pole Charter", a charter that we asked people to reflect on and commit to.

### ***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.

## **Prayer for Reconciliation Week**

### **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.

Amen

\*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.



Friday 27<sup>th</sup> May

**Reading: John 15: 12-17** – *This I command you, that you love one another.*

**Pray for:** Justice for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who know racism and exclusion.

**Reflection:**

Can we say that we truly love one another while some amongst us are feeling such pain?

***As people in our own land, we are shocked by the failure of democratic processes, of the failure to consult with us and of the total disregard for us as human beings. We demand the return of our rights, our freedom to live our traditional lives, support to develop our economic enterprises to develop jobs and to work towards a better future for all our peoples...we must appeal to all people of Australia to walk with us in true equality.*** NT Elders' statement, 7 February 2011

Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> May

**Reading: John 15:18-21** – *If they persecuted me, they will persecute you too.*

**Pray for:** All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in prison or other areas of the justice system.

**Reflection:**

How is it that so many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are incarcerated? How are our law and order policies failing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples?

**Indigenous Australians make up more than a quarter (26%) of all prisoners, yet are only 2.5 % of the Australian population (ABS 2010). In Western Australia and South Australia, Indigenous Australians were more than 20 times as likely to be imprisoned as non-Indigenous Australians. Over the decade to 2010, the Indigenous imprisonment rate has increased by 52%, from 1,248 per 100,000 adult population in 2000 to 1,892 per 100,000 in 2010. No such increase was noted among non-Indigenous adults (AIHW, 2011).**

Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> May

**Reading: 1 John 14: 15-21** - *I shall ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate.*

**Pray for:** The strength to send ripples of love to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander neighbours.



### Reflection:

What ripples do I create through my words, thoughts and actions?

***Spirituality is the ultimate answer to reconciliation in Australia and everywhere else in the world. Loving ourselves, our families, our neighbours, our countrymen and every other living thing is the reason we are here on earth. If we follow the ripple in the pond when a stone hits the water, we can easily see that the entire pond is affected by that one little stone. If the stone represents love, and it drops somewhere in our universe, that love will send its ripple throughout the entire universe. All the people, birds, animals, insects, plants, trees and rocks will in some way be affected by it. It is the same with anger and hate. We must choose which ripples we wish to send into our universe.*** Bob Randall Songman

Monday 30<sup>th</sup> May

**Reading: John 15:16-26**—*The Spirit of truth will bear witness to me.*

**Pray for:** the Spirit of truth to illuminate our journey of healing

### Reflection:

How does reconciliation help us to find the Soul of Australia?

#### ***The Parable of the Abattoir Wall***

***For many years, the custom in one of the abattoirs had been to paint a coat of whitewash over the bloodstains on its walls. This was found to be a quicker approach to presenting a clean hygienic image than the laborious task of scrubbing down walls. However, the time came when the blood-caked stains from years of white-washing began to turn yellow and a foul smelling slime began to seep from underneath the whitewashed interior. The abattoir had no option but to scrape down the years of accumulated blood-stained whitewash and go back to the original wall surface. There came a point in time, in history, when the scraping back exposure of the cover-ups was necessary before the abattoir could do its work. We believe Australia is now "scraping off the whitewash" and finding its soul.*** Pastor Bill Hollingsworth, 'Message Stick', Journal of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Christian Congress of the Uniting Church in Australia, June 1997.

Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> May

**Reading: Luke 1:39-56** *Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord?*

**Pray for:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls to give them strength in their knowledge of their identity and their place in the world.



### Reflection:

How do I describe and express my identity and belonging in this land?

***The concept of identity is complex and includes the symbolic importance of land and culture but it also allows for an individual response to change. Identity as an aboriginal person, acceptance of yourself, is the most important piece of knowledge that aboriginal people can have for the future.***

Rosalie Kunoth Monks, Speaking Out, 2006

Wednesday 1st June

**Reading: John 16:12-15** *The Spirit of truth will lead you to the complete truth.*

**Pray for:** All those who are experiencing hardship and material poverty.

**Reflection:** What changes do we each need to make to ensure that past injustices are never repeated?

***A future where this Parliament resolves that the injustices of the past must never, never happen again. A future where we harness the determination of all Australians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to close the gap that lies between us in life expectancy, educational achievement and economic opportunity.***

Kevin Rudd, Former Prime Minister, The Apology, February 2008.

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> June

**Reading: John 16:20-23** *You will be sorrowful but your sorrow will be turned into joy.*

**Pray for:** wisdom as we seek to reconcile our past and step together into a shared future of deep respect for our differences and a joyful celebration of those things which bind us.

### Reflection:

What steps for reconciliation can I take in my life?

***Reconciling is about always taking the next step...Each little success creates a platform for more success - a little more self-esteem, a little more sense of what's possible. It's not grand policy half so much as attention to detail. And persistence - making sure it works.*** Mick Dodson, 2009

Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> June - Mabo

**Reading: John 16:20-23** *your joy no one will take from you.*

**Pray for:** All those striving to have their Native Title rights recognised and those who have been dispossessed of their land.

NATSIEC

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**Reflection:**

***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 renewal.***

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