

# Reconciliation, Trinity Sunday and Black Lives Matter

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## Acknowledgement of Country

We have recently celebrated National Reconciliation Week (held each year from 27 May to 3 June). On the last day of NRW, we celebrated Eddie Mabo Day and honoured his courage, tenacity and hope as he campaigned and overturned the concept of Terra Nullius. We are currently standing in solidarity with those who have died in custody and whose families mourn their passing. During the first week of July we will soon celebrate the deep and rich traditions, customs and lore of First Nations communities in NAIDOC week. At this time, as in all times, we acknowledge the First Nations elders, past, present and emerging. Wherever we gather today, we acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land, waterways, seas and skies and proclaim that this land, water and sky was, is and always will be, that of the First Nations peoples.

## A reflection

On 10 June 1770, Lieutenant James Cook named a large bay in the Coral Sea, Trinity Bay, after the feast day that celebrates the divine unity of God, Spirit, Son. The bay was, and is home, to a vibrant First Nations community who has a deep connection to land, waterways, seas and skies and all that is nourished through this space. It would have been a profound experience for Cook, witnessing the beauty of the landscape, perhaps standing in awe of the environment while giving thanks to the faith that sustained him on his journey.

Perhaps it is this faith that we will draw strength from during these turbulent times. As we prepare for the end of Term 2, a term unlike anything we have ever experienced, I have been trying to hold the stories and collective hurt that is being felt around the world in response to systemic racism and black deaths at the hands of law enforcement. In Australia, we are grappling with the unacceptable reality that too many First Nations people have died in custody since the 1991 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. We are standing in solidarity with those in America who are campaigning to overhaul a broken police system. We are being asked to reflect on our past and choose a better future.

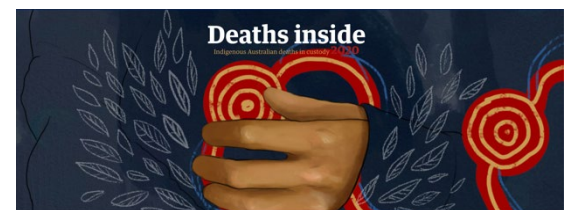


Figure 1 Guardian Australia – [Deaths Inside: Indigenous Australian deaths in Custody 2020](#)

## Prayer

### Walking the path of the Beatitudes – Jesus’ way dismantles racism

Blessed are those that don’t believe their race is superior, for they are open to the energy of love that will flow through them to this beautiful but troubled world.

Blessed are those who mourn for all those they have lost, especially those who died tragically in custody, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the gentle - those who are awake to vulnerability, who attract hearts and open hearts even when surrounded by horror and violence for they will know the fullness of life.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice for our first Nations Peoples for they shall be creators of a community of love.

Blessed are the merciful, striving to love their enemies and loving while expecting nothing in return, for they shall obtain a loving power that is felt through the generations.

### Rachel McLoughlin IBVM



Figure 2 Nathaniel Mokgosi (South African, 1946–), “Come, ye blessed . . .,” 1980. Source: *Christliche Kunst in Afrika*, p. 274 Access on 11.6.2020 <https://artandtheology.org/tag/sermon-on-the-mount/>

Blessed are the pure of heart, those whose deepest desire seeks the loving way forward. They shall realise unity in diversity for all.

Blessed are the peacemakers. Those who don't succumb to hatred. They shall bring reconciliation to their communities.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for condemning racism. They shall bring a divine light to the world through the gift of their life.

### Something to Ponder

Perhaps you could explore the Cairns Catholic Education Community [Reconciliation Action Plan](#) which was virtually launched on 28 May 2020. The RAP is a commitment to Reconciliation in our context. It invites us to learn more about the First Nations wisdom, stories and connections to these lands, seas and waterways. We are asking all members of the Catholic Education Community to join us on this journey; a journey that began in 1869 when Bishop Quinn sought to minister to the First Nations people of FNQ. This journey has not always been easy, or good, or right. But we have come a long way.

I have been thinking about the witness of Fr Noel Connolly, a Columban priest who worked for justice and died from prostate cancer this week. Most recently, his ministry was to journey with the Australian Church through the Dialogue phase of the Plenary Council. In one of his obituaries he is recalled as follows: *He listened with patience...and encouraged people to listen to what the Spirit is saying...His was a mission tailor-made for the storytelling missionary...where the poignant insight, salient lesson and gems of wisdom continued to emerge from even the messiest and diverse discussions.* This is a difficult time, one where we need to listen deeply and respectfully to each other. We invite you to lean into your faith. I can't help but think that this could be a time in which we can emerge "with poignant insights" and "gems of wisdom." A time where the Cairns Catholic Education Community can be a people committed to Reconciliation and Hope.

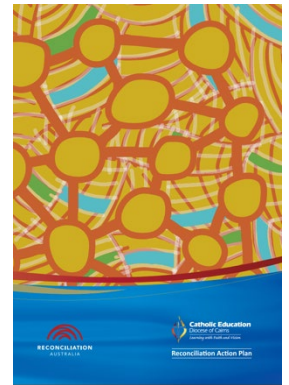


Figure 3 Cairns Catholic Education Community RAP

### Resources

Below are some readings and exercises that you might engage with personally.

- A profound and challenging witness of living life as a First Nations person in Australia today [Meyne Wyatt from Q&A](#)
- A [study that shows 75% of Australians](#) biased against First Nations peoples
- [Why we all must say Black Lives Matter](#)
- A [dialogue with Jesus which appears to be about making peace](#), but is in fact an invitation to consider the privilege space we occupy by virtue of our education, race, gender and age. As the conversation concludes we are asked to consider: *What light might I shine in this moment? What will I commit to doing that advances racial justice? What might I need to sacrifice—to fast from—to build up the world God imagines?*

May we navigate this important moment in our nation and our global history with dialogue, hope and love.