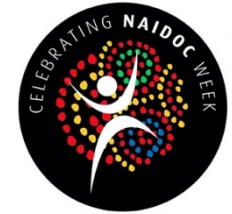


# NAIDOC week prayer and reflection for families

## Acknowledgement of Country, Seas and Waterways

Let us acknowledge the Traditional Custodians who have walked upon and cared for this land for thousands of years. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of the First Nations Peoples to this Country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation. In NAIDOC week, we are invited to consider an eternal theme of this land: *Always Was, Always Will Be*. Today, we acknowledge that these lands, waterways and seas always have been, are, and will always be lands, seas and waterways of the First Nations peoples. We commit to walking with and learning from the elders of these places.



**Always Was,  
Always Will Be.**  
**8-15 NOV 2020**

Figure 1 2020 National NAIDOC logo.

## Context

To help us understand the NAIDOC week theme, *Always Was, Always Will Be*, within the Cairns Diocesan context, you are invited to reflect on the reading from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday, which occurred on 5 July, the 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time; normally, NAIDOC week occurs within 2 weeks of this celebration. This year, as a result of Covid-19, we have been able to consider the theme of NAIDOC and the meaning of the Gospel over weeks, rather than months.

## Settling Prayer

God of all wonder,

We pause in the busyness of our days to listen deeply to the wisdom of this land and those who belong to it.

May our minds be open to dialogue,

May our hearts be open to transformation and

May our hands do the work of reconciliation.

We ask that the Spirit accompany us on our journey of healing on these lands, seas and waterways;

We also ask the Spirit of peace be with all those who are living a life of fear, dispossession and distress.

We make this prayer in the name of Jesus our brother and friend. Amen.

## Scripture

**A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew**

**(11:25-30)**

At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do. "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**



Figure 2 Come from [Berry's Divine Designs](#)

## Responding to what has been heard - Reflection Fr Frank Brennan

On 5 July 1770, 250 years ago, Captain Cook's Endeavour was stranded in what was then named the Endeavour River undergoing repairs. Tupia the Tahitian navigator and the English botanist Joseph Banks were ashore looking at botanical specimens. But Tupia was happy to try out using a gun, hunting for wildlife. According to Banks' journal, they encountered two natives 'digging in the ground for some kind of roots; on seeing him they ran away with great precipitation'. The popular writer Peter Fitzsimons describes the 'two natives peacefully collecting bush tucker as Tupia stands about them, gun brandished'. Tupia went on hunting, firing many shots at wildlife. What must the local Guugu Yimithirr people have thought? Their first encounter with foreign cultures – English and Tahitian. Their first sighting and sounding of a gun. What sort of beginning was this for coming 'Together in the Spirit' – the theme of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday exactly 250 years later? Today we hear those consoling words of Jesus, 'Come to me all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest.'...

In the Uluru Statement from the Heart, Indigenous representatives told us that their '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.' Let's hope that the 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart can help to change hearts, providing a more secure place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the life of the Australian nation.

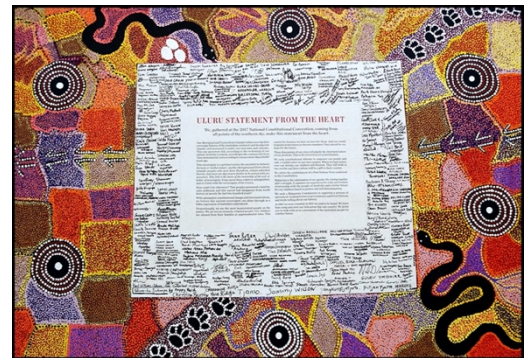


Figure 3 [Uluru Statement.jpg](#)

## Closing Prayer

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.



Fig4 Windows 16-18 at [St Monica's Cathedral](#)

Aboriginal Elders and Reconciliation Church staff members (2014)

## Action

This week is an opportunity celebrate the unique culture and history of the First Nations peoples of the land, seas and waterways that we now call home. You are invited to learn more and engage in celebration by:

- Learn more about NAIDOC week and how you can get involved [here](#)
- Reading more of the [Reflections for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday](#)
- Exploring [A Voice in the Wilderness](#): an 8-part study designed to help the Christians listen to the *Statement from the Heart* and to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.
- Spend some time with family watching some [NAIDOC week TV or films on SBS](#)