



NATSICC LITURGY TEAM WELCOME

Welcome to this year's celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday.

As we gather in faith, we do so as a people shaped by story — by the Gospel, by culture, and by the journeys that have brought us to this moment. We gather in the presence of God, who walks with us always, and who calls us into unity as one people.

This year invites us into reflection. We mark 40 years since St Pope John Paul II spoke to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Alice Springs, and we celebrate 50 years of NAIDOC Week. These milestones are more than anniversaries — they are reminders of enduring faith, resilience, and our shared call to walk together.

At times, it is important to look back. Not to dwell in the past, but to recognise the path that has been travelled — to see the strength, the challenges, and the grace that have carried us forward. In this, we trust in God's providence, present in every step of our journey.

Our theme, *Walking Together in Christ: 40 Years On!*, speaks to this moment. It calls us to continue the journey with humility and hope - listening deeply, and walking side by side as one Body in Christ, guided by the Holy Spirit.

Across this land, the Church is enriched by the cultures and voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Their spirituality, connection to Country, and deep sense of community continue to shape and strengthen the life of the Church in Australia.

As St Pope John Paul II reminded us, the Church is enriched by the many cultures it embraces. This is not something we simply acknowledge — it is something we are called to live.

Today's Liturgy is an invitation to listen to, reflect, and to encounter Christ in one another.

Wherever you are gathered — in Parish, school, or community — may this celebration be a moment of grace. May it renew our hearts, deepen our unity, and strengthen our commitment to walk together in faith.

We thank you for being part of this journey.

NATSICC Liturgy Team



Image Supplied

In November 1986, something remarkable happened at Alice Springs. Saint John Paul II became the first Pope to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples on their own Country — speaking words of respect, solidarity, and deep spiritual recognition. 40 years on, those words still resonate. Below are a Selection of his words.



HEAD

"Your 'Dreaming'... is your only way of touching the mystery of God's Spirit in you and in creation. You must keep your striving for God and hold on to it in your lives."

- Saint Pope John Paul II



HEART

"If you stay closely united, you are like a tree standing in the middle of a bush-fire sweeping through the timber. The leaves are scorched and the tough bark is scarred and burned; but inside the tree the sap is still flowing, and under the ground the roots are still strong. Like that tree you have endured the flames, and you still have the power to be reborn. The time for this rebirth is now!"

- Saint Pope John Paul II



HANDS

"You do not have to be people divided into two parts, as though an Aboriginal had to borrow the faith and life of Christianity, like a hat or a pair of shoes, from someone else who owns them."

- Saint Pope John Paul II

These quotes are drawn from the Head, Heart & Hands reflection activity — see pages 20–21.

The full activity, including a Facilitator Guide and a version for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, is available at www.natsicc.org.au.



National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council
admin@natsicc.org.au | www.natsicc.org.au