

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Resources
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday

Dear Brothers and Sisters, May we be one in love is this year's theme for the celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday. Our collective journey calls us to live out this theme - to be one in spirit, love and respect. Achieving such unity assists us to maintain our identity, our sense of purpose and our hope for the future. This has not always been an easy part of our journey - the call for "unity" or "one people" has so often been corrupted to be a call for assimilation, for destruction rather than preservation. In Pope John Paul's Message for World Day of Peace he spoke strongly about effective dialogue between cultures making possible a civilisation of love and peace. He talks of the need to recognise and value difference and to see that "the uniqueness of each culture is reflected more or less clearly in those individuals who are its bearers....". The Pope goes on to state:

It is the dialogue which protects the distinctness of culture as historical and creative expressions of the underlying unity of the human family, and which sustains understanding and communion between them. The notion of communion....never implies a dull uniformity or enforced homogenisation or assimilation; rather it expresses the convergence of a multiform variety, and is therefore a sign of richness and promise of growth. Dialogue leads to a recognition of diversity and opens the mind to mutual acceptance and genuine collaboration....

This is the type of dialogue and sharing that we have been attempting to participate in through the Reconciliation process and through the challenges and celebrations of the Jubilee Year. Continually we seek to offer our cultures through our persons to the Church to enhance our journey towards a truly Australian spirituality open to and valued by all. As we in NATSICC pursue this goal, we continue to need to be sustained and nurtured by those with whom we want to share. Our existence and our work is solely reliant on the good will of Parishes around Australia and their willingness to voluntarily make an annual contribution to NATSICC. This is a precarious position and does not make long term planning and dreaming a possibility. We are very grateful to all those who do sustain us - financially and spiritually, and we need the loving support of all of our communities - Indigenous and non-Indigenous as we continue to strive to share our cultures with all within the Catholic Church to build an Australian Church that reflects our differences yet rejoices in our "oneness". I invite all parishes to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday on the 1st of July. It is my hope that the resources we have provided will facilitate a joyful and meaningful celebration of this important day in the Church calendar. Let us join in this journey together. With my very best wishes, Vicki Walker
Chairperson

Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Francesco Canalini with Bishop Saunders enjoying the dancing on the occasion of the Apostolic Nuncio's recent visit. Photo supplied by the Diocese of Broome