



# National Sorry Day

May 26 2021



CATHOLIC EDUCATION  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## Introduction

Today, we gather to acknowledge the past policies and practices which caused hurt, dispossession and loss of identity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We acknowledge that there needs to be healing between non-Aboriginal people and Aboriginal people. Pope John Paul II in 1986 reminded Australians that "for thousands of years this culture of yours was free to grow without interference by people from other places. You lived your lives in spiritual closeness to the land, with its animals, birds, fishes, waterholes, rivers, hills and mountains. Through your closeness to the land, you touched the sacredness of man's relationship with God, for the land was the proof of a power in life greater than yourselves."

The first National Sorry Day was held on 26 May 1998, one year after the *Bringing Them Home* report was presented to parliament. The *Bringing Them Home* report was the result of an inquiry into the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, and recommended an apology and reparations to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This National Sorry Day, let us all reflect on the need for genuine reconciliation – not just in word, but in deed and in action. Genuine reconciliation requires acknowledgement of the harm done by those enacting past policies, and those who did not act out against these policies, so that healing can reach the whole community. Today, and every day moving forward, we are invited to take action to make reconciliation a priority in order to heal relationships and build a future of compassion and respect with Aboriginal people.

As we gather, we acknowledge the land on which we meet, recognise and respect the ongoing relationship and spiritual connection in which this land has always been held and pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of this land.



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## Penitential Prayers

On this National Sorry Day, we remember Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People with deep respect, and honour their presence on this soil for thousands and thousands of years.

For any lack of respect:

**All: Lord, we are sorry.**

On this National Sorry Day, we acknowledge the disruption, the destruction and death visited on this land since colonisation.

For this violent history:

**All: Lord, we are sorry.**

On this National Sorry Day, we acknowledge the loss of life, culture, lore and language.

For this devastation:

**All: Lord, we are sorry.**

On this National Sorry Day, we express shame for the practices that led to the forcible removal of children, the dislocation of family, and the ongoing intergenerational trauma that is experienced.

For this ongoing trauma:

**All: Lord, we are sorry.**

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

**Amen**



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## Opening Prayer

Let us pray:

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.

Amen.

## First Reading

[1 John 3:16-18]

A reading from the first letter of John.

This is the proof of love, that he laid down his life for us, and we too ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone is well-off in worldly possessions and sees his brother in need but closes his heart to him, how can the love of God be remaining in him? Children, our love must be not just words or mere talk, but something active and genuine.

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.



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## Responsorial Psalm

[Psalm 119]

The response is:

**God, teach me your ways  
and I will follow them closely.**

God, teach me your ways  
and I will follow them closely.  
Help me understand your will,  
that I may cherish your law.

### Response

Guide me along your path,  
a way of delight.  
Open my heart to your laws  
and not to riches.

### Response

Let me speak the whole truth,  
for I await your justice.  
I keep your word, now and always.

### Response

Remember what you promised me,  
I wait in hope.  
In sorrow, this is my comfort:  
Your life-giving word.

### Response



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## Gospel [Matthew 25:31-40]

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

When the Son of man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels, then he will take his seat on his throne of glory. All nations will be assembled before him and he will separate people one from another as the shepherd separates sheep from goats. He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right hand, "Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take as your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you made me welcome, lacking clothes and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me." Then the upright will say to him in reply, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome, lacking clothes and clothe you? When did we find you sick or in prison and go to see you?" And the King will answer, "In truth I tell you, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.



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## The Lord's Prayer

Our Father,  
who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.

Amen

## Final Prayer

Father,  
God of all people and every place,  
You created us equal, to know you, to love you and to love each other.  
On this National Sorry Day, we seek forgiveness for past hurts and present situations and ask that the spirit of reconciliation come down upon us and be evident in justice, in peace and in positive change, so that the peoples of this land are accepted and respected, are able to live in harmony, and to flourish.  
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord, who together with the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns with you God forever and ever.

Amen.



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This liturgy has been developed and adapted by Catholic Education Western Australia Ltd for use on National Sorry Day 2021.

## References:

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<https://www.natsicc.org.au/>

[http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1986/november/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_19861129\\_aborigeni-alice-springs-australia.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1986/november/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19861129_aborigeni-alice-springs-australia.html)



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