
We, the people of Boonah Catholic parish,
acknowledge the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation.

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which our parish is located
and where we conduct our mission and ministry.

We pay our respects to ancestors and elders, past and present.

As a local community of faith within the Church of Brisbane,
we are committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples'
unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas
and their rich contribution to society.



Heal Country

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday 4 July 2021
Celebrating the gifts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics



Visit www.natsicc.org.au for a variety of resources

Virtual *Acknowledgement of Country* offered for today from the
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council (NATSICC):

<https://www.natsicc.org.au/assets/natsicc-mass-opening-video-final-20210624.mp4>

Warm greetings to the members of the Boonah Catholic community and beyond on the 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time which our Catholic bishops of Australia designate as the annual commemoration of National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (NATSI) Sunday.

1. REFLECTIONS ON THE SUNDAY WORD.

The **first reflection** for this Sunday is from the *Catholic WomenPreach* website and the preacher is Emily Southerton.

Emily serves as a Catholic Chaplain delivering spiritual care and support at Phoebe Ministries- a faith based, long term, assisted care facility in eastern Pennsylvania.

Originally from Michigan, Emily graduated from Aquinas College with a bachelor of arts, double majoring in philosophy and theology.



After her undergraduate studies she taught English in Ukraine at UCU (Ukrainian Catholic University) in Lviv, Ukraine. In the autumn of 2017, Emily entered the graduate program at Villanova University and graduated in 2019 with a master's in theology and certification in pastoral ministry. During Emily's time at Villanova she worked as graduate assistant with Latino/a campus ministry outreach. Emily facilitated a three-part series workshops for RCIA leaders on ministerial pedagogy at Romero Center Ministries. Emily served as an advisor on the San Diego VIA International Trip offered through Villanova Student Justice and Education (SJE) program. Emily also taught English (ESL) in Upper Darby through Villanova Community Outreach Volunteer (COV) program.

At Villanova Emily encountered her call to chaplaincy. She completed her first unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) at Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services near Byron Center Michigan. From 2019-2020 amidst the pandemic and getting married she began and completed a three unit- residency in CPE at Christiana Care Health System, in Newark Delaware. Currently, Emily is working towards becoming a board certified chaplain through the National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC).

In her profession and personal life, Emily enjoys: crafting devotions, chaplain chats, writing sermons, drinking tea, reading Pablo Neruda's poetry, hiking waterways and water falls, and practically engaging theology through the lens of ethics, social justice, and social media.

Here is the link to her homily:

<https://www.catholicwomenpreach.org/preaching/07042021>

The [second reflection](#) is from Br. Julian McDonald CFC, an Australian.

For ease of reading Julian's reflection week, I have added it as a .pdf attachment to this email.



On this Sunday we include a [third reflection](#) which is a homily from the national resources for *NATSI Sunday 2021*:

This year NATSICC has adopted the NAIDOC theme for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday – Heal Country. In *Laudato si'*, Pope Francis has called us to continue to seek greater protections for our lands, our waters, our sacred sites and our cultural heritage from exploitation, desecration, and destruction.

Today's Gospel is fitting because Mark tells us of Jesus returning to his 'native place' – Nazareth – to a non-accepting, hostile reaction. Jesus had been welcomed and revered in other places, why is it that he is mocked and disregarded in his own home? 'Is he not the carpenter?' the crowd called because they saw him as 'without honour' and were unable to believe in him. He did not fit into their ideological view and thus did not deserve respect in their eyes.

In Australia, our own First Nations people have suffered a similar reception to Jesus in Nazareth. Their knowledge and complex cultural systems, created and honed over millennia, are often dismissed as primitive and irrelevant to our fast-paced world of today. This could not be further from the truth, particularly as we become more aware of their continued care, love, and respect for 'country', grounded in a relationship with the creator that formed independently of Western influence.

2021 marks the 250th anniversary of the arrival of Christianity in Australia. Yet the Spirit of God was poured out onto the original inhabitants of this great Southern Land many, many thousands of years prior. God's Spirit could be heard through the singing of the birds, the cascade of the waterfall, the rustle of the wind and, most importantly, in silence.

Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann, a respected Ngangiwumirr Elder, artist and 2021 Senior Australian of the year explains the importance of listening and understanding the silence:

My people today, recognise and experience in this quietness, the great Life-Giving Spirit, the Father of us all. It is easy for me to experience God's presence. When I am out hunting, when I am in the bush, among the trees, on a hill or by a billabong; these are the times when I can simply be in God's presence. My people have been so aware of Nature. It is natural that we will feel close to the Creator.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are inextricably connected to country in Australia and its waters. This connection to country and all of God's creation is core to their spirituality as a people and that of their ancestors. The term itself – Country – encompasses far more than the physical land. 'For us, Country is a word for all the values, places, resources, stories and cultural obligations associated with that area and its

features. It describes the entirety of our ancestral domains', explains Professor Mick Dodson.

Deacon Boniface Perdjert, who was both Australia's first permanent deacon and first Aboriginal deacon clearly expressed the translational role that 'country' or nature plays bringing together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture and Catholic faith:

We like the way he uses the things of nature to teach, and the important part nature plays in the Sacraments.

Deacon Boniface specifically mentions sacraments, because to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, all elements of life are sacramental. The gifts of God are evident and intertwined into every aspect of life, not just on Sundays, or when convenient. First Australian's are called to be stewards of creation, to care for and watch over their gift, and this responsibility is intrinsic to their belief systems. Many language groups assign a *totem* (a natural object, plant or animal) to a child at birth. This totem defines the responsibility of care between individuals and with creation itself. It is intrinsic and it is core to their survival and relationships.

For Catholics, the Eucharist itself is a foundational sacramental reality in which natural elements - grain and grapes - symbolise not only our lives but also Jesus' farewell meal and his presence today. In those natural elements and through the Eucharistic prayer, Christ is truly present to us. These elements display the abundance provided by the Creator to sustain us, both physically and spiritually. It is a very natural and familiar 'ritual' to First Nations Peoples because it combines the elements of life with a greater being. It brings all aspects of life together.

Because of the connection that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people recognise between country, faith and the wellbeing, it is no surprise that when the world is in pain, Australia's First Peoples are in pain. During the COVID 19 pandemic, many of the trappings of Western life became impossible. The rivers were calm and clear from the absence of boats, the cities were quiet and still as restrictions took hold. We saw images of animals returning to previous habitats, and the smog clearing from above cities across the world as our common home took a 'breath' from our constant consumerism and drive for development.

On this special Sunday, a day where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-indigenous Catholics come together and sit side by side (adhering to COVID restrictions of course!), we should acknowledge that we are united in a fight to save God's creation. It is one we cannot fight alone. We must combine the knowledge of First Australians with the technology borne of Western culture to ensure that future generations shall have the opportunity to experience the gifts of God's creation as intended.

Again, today's Gospel also speaks of the need for faith and acceptance to enable gifts to be shared. Mark says: 'So he was not able to perform any mighty deed there, apart from curing a few sick people by laying his hands on them.' Without faith, Jesus knew his miracles would not be accepted as such. This teaches us that we must have trust and faith to truly accept the wonders of God.

To sit, talk, and listen is the first step towards acceptance and understanding. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have longed to share their knowledge and wisdom about the seasons, animals, and flora, but until we, as a society and a country are receptive, their

contribution goes unappreciated and unutilised.

The more we share with each other, the more we realise that as humans, we have more similarities than differences. The differences between our cultures should not be seen as weaknesses, for they can also be where our strengths lie. Embracing these differences is an aspect of inculturation. Christian faith must find appropriate expression in each culture – that is what is meant by inculturation. Pope Francis, in his exhortation *Beloved Amazonia* says:

Inculturation elevates and fulfils. Certainly, we should esteem the indigenous mysticism that sees the interconnection and interdependence of the whole of creation, the mysticism of gratuitousness that loves life as a gift, the mysticism of a sacred wonder before nature and all its forms of life.

Let us move forwards as a united people in Christ, committed to embracing the gifts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge to not only Heal Country, but to Heal our relationships with one another, and in doing so our creators' gifts to us all – this world.

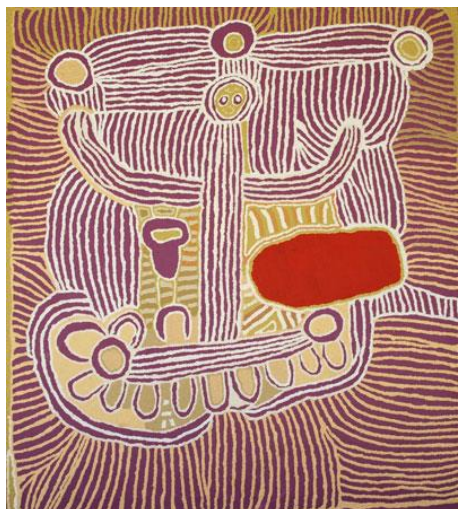
2. *Boonah Parish happenings . . .*

from commands to invitations,
from laws to ideals,
from threats to persuasion,
from coercion to conscience,
from monologue to conversation,
from ruling to serving,
from withdrawn to integrated,
from vertical and top-down to horizontal,
from exclusion to inclusion,
from hostility to friendship,
from static to changing,
from passive acceptance to active engagement,
from prescriptive to principled,
from defined to open-ended,
from behaviour-modification to conversion of heart,
from the dictates of law to the dictates of conscience,
from external conformity to the joyful pursuit of holiness.

When these elements are taken in the aggregate, they indicate a model of spirituality. This, they say, is what good Catholics should look like and this is how they should behave. That means the elements indicate what the Church should look like and how it should behave. This is a significant model-shift. This is a teaching of the Second Vatican Council.

- Fr. John O'Malley SJ, 2006

Our **SUNDAY EUCHARIST** schedule is:



Desert Eucharist
Linda Syddick Napaltjarri
(b. 1937)

Saturday

5.00pm Boonah church

Sunday

7.30am 1st and 3rd Sunday: Harrisville church

2nd and 4th Sunday: Peak Crossing church

9.30am Boonah church

NB: Next Sunday 11th July, 7.30am Sunday Mass is celebrated at Peak Crossing church –
2nd Sunday of the month

NB. Last Sunday we announced parishes across the Archdiocese were to take up the annual Peter's Pence as a retiring collection this weekend.

It has been postponed due to the uncertainty of last week. A revised date will be set in the future.

Our **WEEKDAY EUCHARIST** schedule for this week, the 14th week of Ordinary Time, is:

Monday	5th July	8.00am, Boonah church
Tuesday	6th July	No Mass (due to mid-morning Brisbane meeting)
Wednesday	7th July	6.00pm, Peak Crossing church followed by dinner at <i>The Peak Pub</i>
Thursday	8th July	No Mass (due to all-day Brisbane clergy course)



We pray with and for those who are sick in our parish and beyond: all across the globe infected with COVID-19; former pastor of Boonah parish Fr. Ellis Clifford, Chris Healy, Paul White, Arthur Devin, Liliana Toohill, Libby Shields, Marko Babic, Dermot Peters, Max Gardiner, Bernice Lippiatt, Pat Toohill, Trish Merlehan, Bernadette Pinchin, Simon Greatrex, Neil O'Connor, Cate Mitten, Bernice Brault, Paula Ebrington, Fletcher Casey, Jill Archer, Matthew

Bowden, Louisa and sick members of parish families and those beyond our parish boundaries.

- This Sunday marks the start of NAIDOC week 2021. This week concludes next Sunday 11th July.

In the late 1990s the Australian Conference of Catholic Bishops voted to commemorate National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday on the first Sunday of July at the start of NAIDOC Week.



Source: naidoc.org.au

A sharp challenge by *Fr Andrew Hamilton SJ*

This year the theme of the National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week (4-11 July) is short, sharp and challenging. It is 'Heal Country!' It calls on all of us to continue to seek greater protections for our lands, our waters, our sacred sites and our cultural heritage from exploitation, desecration, and destruction.

NAIDOC Week, of course, is built on the determination of many Indigenous people who recognised that they were neither respected nor heard to work for change. They spoke truth to power, a truth that has rarely been acknowledged. The organisation grew out of the recognition that it inappropriate to celebrate Australia Day on the anniversary of the arrival of the First Fleet, an event which marked the beginning of their dispossession. They began to organise in order to find practical recognition by other Australians of their right to participate in society as equal members, but faced opposition at every corner. On the question of Australia's national day they still face opposition, but have now built considerable support in the wider community.

NAIDOC Week was born out of that movement. It continues to provide an opportunity for all Australians to join in celebrating the culture and aspirations and hopes of Indigenous and Torres Strait Islanders. And to listen to their voice.

The theme of NAIDOC Week this year takes up an issue of concern to all Australians – the protection of country and cultural heritage. It comes at a time when the prevailing apathy, carelessness and vandalism about the destruction of sites central to Indigenous culture and history has been challenged. The reaction to the destruction of the Juukan Gorge caves in Western Australia aroused amazement and outrage outside Australia, and cost Rio Tinto and its investors reputation, money and the service of prominent office holders. Similar threats to heritage on Fortescue claims and on the Burrup Peninsula have also aroused widespread comment and will be difficult to ignore. The protests and publicity given them have shaken the insouciance of Australians to the importance of its history, revealed most strikingly in the blindness to the importance of preserving the national archives. An ancient Roman observer of these things might well suspect that the barbarians had taken over the Empire.

That is why the theme of NAIDOC Week is so timely. Heal Country has many meanings. It can mean healing a country sacred to its people which has been vandalised by exploitation. It might also mean healing a divided nation which treats its original people so disrespectfully. At a deeper level, it might mean healing a blindness and lack of respect for what should be sacred. This blindness sees human beings as no more than individuals in a competitive economy, ignoring their personal value and the complex and subtle relationships through time and space that shape them. It shows a lack of respect in particular for the relationship to environment, which puts at risk the future of all Australians through global warming.

The naming of the week and its emphasis belongs to the Aboriginal and Islander communities. But attending to the theme is the business all Australians, not simply the Indigenous. It is about forming the respectful and decent relationships that engender pride within communities. The Week is a time for engaging with one another, for recognising and celebrating the many ways in which pride has been built in Indigenous communities, and for pressing that in their relationships to people and to the environment governments and other institutions show the respect which opens out to healing.



- Last Sunday afternoon we celebrated the baptism of **Grace Lochran**, son of Emily and Leo.

Thanks to the family for sharing a photo of the family including the godparents and the presiding minister!

We had scheduled the baptism of two young ones this weekend. Due to the lockdown and uncertainty at this time the families have deferred the celebration for the moment.

- For the celebration of **1st Rite for Reconciliation** and all sacraments for children and adults please see me after Sunday Mass to make a convenient time or email the parish.

- *Do you want to join the Catholic faith community?*

Are you interested in speaking to someone about a process?

The first step is a cuppa and a conversation. From there we will discern and decide appropriate preparation and support for you. Please see me on the weekend or email the parish:
boonah@bne.catholic.net.au

- **EVERY SUNDAY** when we gather for the Sunday eucharist, there are baskets (of some or another) at the entrances of our two churches.

We are invited to bring a gift of **non-perishable food or goods** for people seeking help from our local St. Vincent de Paul.

There is a great response each Sunday from the assembly at Harrisville. *Thanks!*

There is also an emerging and positive response from the two assemblies who gather at Boonah. *Thanks!*

The local conference very much appreciates our weekly support.

- **THANK YOU** to all who support the weekly Sunday collection. Your gifts enable the parish to meet its expenses and to function like an everyday household. If you would like to give weekly or monthly in a planned way, please see me.

The new envelopes for the new giving year are now available. Most have been collected and a few remain to be collected.

A few people have seen me about giving electronically. *Thank you!* At Masses this Sunday, I have the paperwork with me to set up electronic giving.

Someone was also sharing with me it is becoming easier to arrange giving through other electronic means that doesn't require setting up the authority between your bank and our ADF. Check it out!

I was hungry and you fed me
Matthew 25



- **THANK YOU** to those amongst us who, week by week, *send out* the FlockNote invites, *prepare* the churches for the celebration of Mass, *coordinate* the arrival and departure of the assembly especially on Sundays, *exercise* liturgical ministry in necessary ways (readers, sacristans, servers, organists, PowerPoint preparer and operators), and *clean* the churches after the celebration of the liturgy as we are required to do in this time of COVID-19.

- From next Friday 9th July all who attend Places of Worship in Queensland are required to sign-in to Mass and all other celebrations with the *Check In Qld app*.

The process is the same for us as in all other venues – scan the QR code and register. QR codes for each church will be in place from next Sunday.

If you can't scan in, please see the COVID COORDINATOR at Sunday Mass who will help you.



- Last Tuesday 29th June at the Cathedral of St. Stephen, Archbishop Coleridge ordained four presbyters, three for our local Church of Brisbane and one for The Passionists.

The Passionist Community have had a monastery at Oxley (in the parish of Darra-Jindalee) since 1956. Their community is involved in the ministries of parish missions and retreats, hospital chaplaincy, spiritual direction as well as assisting local parishes and the Cathedral of St Stephen.

With the State lockdown announced to start at 6pm Tuesday night, the decision was made to begin the liturgy at 3.30pm.

A stellar effort was put in by the staff of the Cathedral and other agencies to make this happen. Emails were sent to parishes and pastors. Text messages were sent to pastors advising the time change.

I was very glad that most of the ordained clergy of our South Country deanery were able to be there. Here are some snaps:



Archbishop Coleridge during the homily.



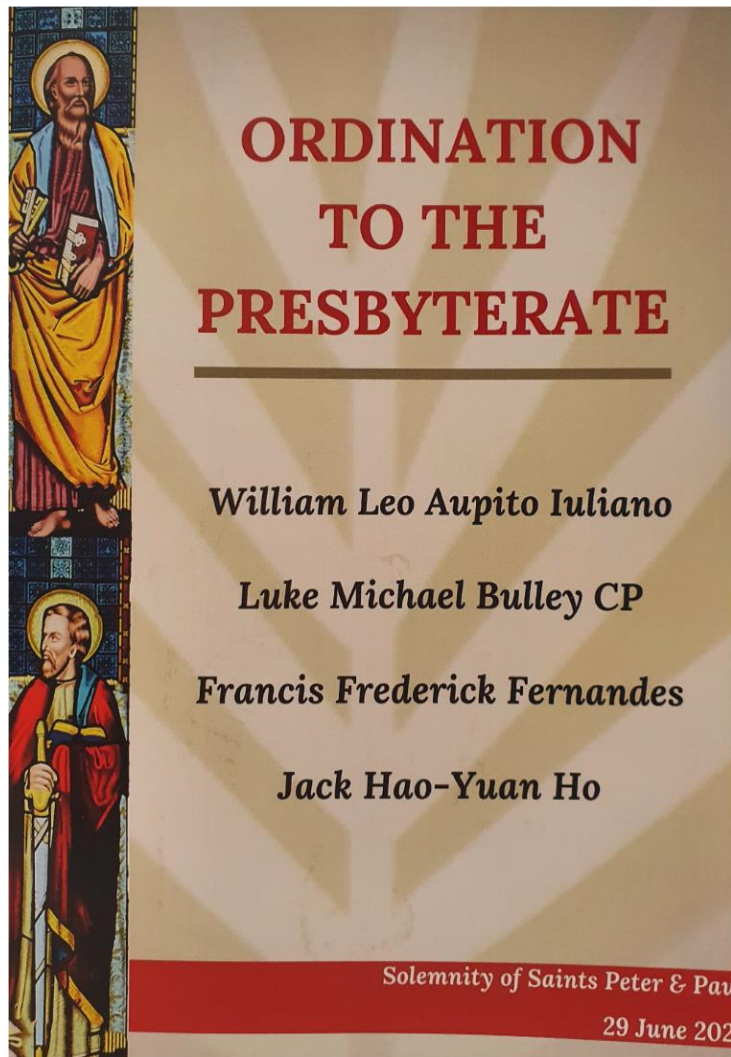
The promise of the elect: Luke, Jack, Francis, William



The laying of hands.



The laying of hands – close-up.



- Our northern neighbouring parish in this deanery is seeking a part time youth coordinator. You may know of someone who is suited for this role or who may be interested in the same:

Position Vacant – Youth Coordinator

Applications are open for a position at the Ipswich Catholic Community. A person who is able to evangelise young people by connecting them with the person of Christ and the Church through involvement in the Parish community is required for a part time position of Youth Coordinator for 20 hours per week. Weekend and evening work will be required.

For additional information, please visit the Archdiocese of Brisbane website <https://brisbanecatholic.org.au/> and to careers.

The Archdiocese of Brisbane has standards of conduct for employees and volunteers to maintain a safe and healthy environment. Our commitment to these standards requires that we conduct background referencing for all persons who will engage in direct and regular involvement with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.

3. FRANCIS, THE COMIC STRIP by Pat Marrin – 29th June 2021.



4. Reflections on Healing Country, Thursday, 8 July, 2:00 pm–3:15 pm AEST



**HEAL
COUNTRY!**
4-11 JULY 2021

The University of Divinity community is warmly invited to join us for a webinar during NAIDOC Week reflecting on this year's theme, 'Heal Country!' Garry Deverell and Naomi Wolfe will be joined by Aunties Sherry Balcombe and Janet Turpie-Johnstone, as well as Uncle Glenn

Loughrey, to explore questions around the wounding of country through both past and ongoing colonial practices, and also what might need to occur in order for country to experience some measure of healing.

Speakers

Aunty Sherry Balcombe is an Olkola and Djabaguy woman and Director of Aboriginal Catholic Ministries for the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

Rev'd Dr Garry Deverell is a Trawlolway man and Vice-Chancellor's Fellow, Indigenous Theologies, University of Divinity.

Rev'd Uncle Glenn Loughrey is a Wiradjuri man, the vicar of St Oswald's, Glen Iris, and an accomplished artist and writer.

Rev'd Aunty Janet Turpie-Johnstone is a Gundit-jamara woman, a retired Anglican priest, and a PhD candidate with the Australian National University.

Ms Naomi Wolfe is a Trawlolway women and First People's Coordinator in the University of Divinity.

https://vox.divinity.edu.au/event/reflections-on-healing-country/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=SocialWarfare

5. Some local and international articles for our formation and general awareness.

◆ **The Catholic Church must come clean – completely – about what it did to Native Americans**

The Editors

America: The Jesuit Review

30th June 2021



A young woman takes part in a rally in Toronto June 6, 2021, after the remains of 215 children were on the grounds of the Kamloops Indian Residential School in May. For years Indigenous people in Canada have wanted an apology from the pope for the church's role in abuse at Catholic-run residential schools. (CNS photo/Chris Helgren, Reuters)

Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission has helped all Canadians and First Nations communities grapple with the sorrowful realities of their nation's colonial past, particularly the gruesome legacy of its residential schools for Indigenous children. Those schools, many administered by Catholic religious orders and intended to be engines of assimilation, became centres of despair and brutality.

The recent discovery of hundreds of unmarked graves at two schools, and the likelihood that thousands more will be found at other residential school sites, have added to the anguish. But at least in Canada, a foundation for healing is being laid by the government-sponsored truth and reconciliation commission.

No similar process has started in the United States, though many of the same outrages likely occurred on this side of the border, in the system of more than 350 Native American boarding schools in the 19th century that were the model for the Canadian network. And just as in Canada,

the Catholic Church had a significant role in the administration of this “schooling,” which stripped Native American children of their languages and cultures.

Forgiveness and healing can begin only after the most difficult part is addressed: confronting the past, speaking the truth, revealing the worst.

Beginning in 1819 and continuing through 1969, the U.S. government provided the resources and logistical support for the schools, and religious groups, including the Catholic Church, were among the willing recipients. According to the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, by 1926 there were 357 schools in 30 states with more than 60,000 children. Catholic religious orders here in the United States administered 84 of the schools. The Society of Jesus managed four of them.

The Department of Interior is for the first time in U.S. history being led by a Native American. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland has ordered an investigation into the history of these schools and a search for graves of children who may have perished at them.

Announcing the initiative, Ms. Haaland said she hoped it would “shed light on the unspoken traumas of the past.”

“I know that this process will be long and difficult,” she said. “I know that this process will be painful. It won’t undo the heartbreak and loss that so many of us feel. But only by acknowledging the past can we work toward a future that we’re all proud to embrace.”

It will be difficult after so long to determine the cause of death for many of the children that will be found in such graves. Many of the deceased will surely be found to have perished because of diseases like tuberculosis, which likewise claimed many lives among the school children at residential schools in Canada. But identifying TB and other forms of “natural” mortality among these schoolchildren will not tell the full story.

A thorough review of surviving records will be important to help tease out individual stories and help build a broader narrative of mortality at the boarding schools. The church in the United States should make every effort now to prepare for this Department of Interior investigation and for the larger, comprehensive undertaking to unravel the complete history of the boarding schools and the church’s role in the mistreatment of these Indigenous children.

For decades the people of God were anguished by the obfuscation on the part of those church leaders who allowed only a trickle of incomplete document releases from diocesan and provincial archives while investigators struggled to get to the truth about the abuse of children by U.S. priests and the cover-up of those crimes. The church in the United States must demonstrate that it has learned from the suffering such failures imposed on survivors, their families and Catholics everywhere.

Now is the time and here is the opportunity. As this preliminary investigation begins, the church must bring everything out into the light – completely and quickly. U.S. church officials

should vigorously seek out and share the archives and material locked away in chanceries, academic archives and the attics of religious communities. Forgiveness and healing can begin only after the most difficult part is addressed: confronting the past, speaking the truth, revealing the worst.

Source

♦ **What Does It Mean to be Prophetic Today?**

Kenyatta Gilbert talks with Walter Brueggemann about the prophetic call in 2018.

Video: <https://youtu.be/Y-rVAtK5gPo>



Kenyatta Gilbert, associate professor of homiletics at the Howard University School of Divinity:
Professor Brueggemann, thank you for this opportunity to chat.

Walter Brueggemann, professor emeritus at Columbia Theological Seminary:
Well, I'm so glad to be with you and get to talk.

Gilbert: So, what is a prophet?

Brueggemann: Well, in terms of the Old Testament that I spent my time with, I think a prophet is someone that tries to articulate the world as though God were really active in the world. And, that means on the one hand, to identify those parts of our world order that are contradictory to God, but on the other hand, it means to talk about the will and purpose that God has for the world that will indeed come to fruition even in circumstances that we can't imagine. So, what that gives you is both judgement and hope, and as you know very well, the prophetic books of the Old Testament are always that combination of judgement and hope, which I think, in Christian tradition, factors out as crucifixion and resurrection. And we don't often get that, the hope side, of the prophetic word in our own usage. What about you?

Gilbert: A prophet is someone who sees that this is not all there is, but is willing to face the fact that we are in a predicament and it's only as we co-participate with God, can we find ourselves moving in the direction of a beloved community. So, when I think about what it means to be prophetic, I'm thinking, well, you talk about being numb to this present reality, you talk about royal consciousness, alternative consciousness. What do those things mean to you? And how are you able to find this language?

Brueggemann: Well I think it means to identify with some clarity and boldness the kinds of political economic practices that contradict the purposes of God, and if they contradict the purposes of God, they will come to no good end. So, if you think about economic injustice or if you think about ecological abuse of the environment, it is the path of disaster. And in the Old Testament they traced the path of disaster and it seems to me that our work now is to trace the path of disaster in which we are engaged. The amazing thing about the prophets is that they were able to pivot after they had done that to talk with confidence that God is working out an alternative world of well-being and justice and peace and security in spite of the contradiction. So, they were in the ancient world, they were courageous, and the prophets that we can identify now have the same kind of courage.

Gilbert: I think you're right. I think if we can establish some sense of clarity about who we believe that God is in this world of radical pluralism... is it our work to get everyone on the same page when we think about God?

Brueggemann: Well, I think as long as we try to talk in terms of labels or creed or mantras, we will never get on the same page, but I think if we talk about human possibility and human hurt and human pain and human suffering, then it doesn't matter whether we are Muslims or Christians or liberals or conservatives, the irreducible reality of human hurt is undeniable and then we have to talk about what are the causes of human hurt and what are the remedies of human hurt and then we get to politics and economics and I don't think that's easy given the political pluralism, but I do think that the prophetic word on that basis can be fairly unambiguous. And, it's no mystery about the kinds of economic practices that are causing human hurt and under President Trump, they basically have to do with deregulation which means unleashing greedy power. So, we could talk about that whether we're Christian or Muslim or liberal or conservative--that's how my mind works about it.

Gilbert: What I try to do is say to students, if you can declare something in the here and now about the human predicament, take seriously what is going on in our world, that we live in death-dealing circumstances that marginalize, victimize those persons who are already vulnerable and in America, you have such a dichotomy between the privileged and the disenfranchised that it's really pronounced to me where the predicaments are. But what is the proposition that would be the next thing? What is the proposition in light of divine intervention? If God is a God who intervenes on the human plane, what do we believe about that God reversing or addressing this?

Brueggemann: I think what we believe is that God energizes and empowers human agency and human agents, when they are empowered, can change this. So, what happens to well off people like me? We don't want to exercise human agency; we like it the way it is and if we are terribly disadvantaged, one can be in such despair that you don't undertake any human agency. So, it seems to me that the point of preaching is to say that God's hopes are to be performed through human agency and it seems to me that the promise of the gospel is that the powers and principalities will yield to human agency that is authorized and empowered by God. And, that's a hard piece of news because on the one hand, we want to despair or on the other hand, we want to wait passively and have God do something for us.

Gilbert: Well, let me ask you this question because when I think about labels, social justice, prophetic hope, I just don't know if there is sufficient clarity in the consciousness of the average Christian. We kind of throw those labels around and often there's a lot more confusion than clarity.

Brueggemann: I do not think that we have done a good job of teaching and I think we really need to be intentional teachers that clarify these categories. So, if we're going to talk about prophetic consciousness, I don't think that means some mystical apparatus. I think it means the capacity to imagine the world seen through the eyes of the Gospel God.

Gilbert: But do you believe that there are persons who come to this world who are special and specifically designated to do these kind of works or is it just the willingness to want to help persons imagine something better than this present reality

Brueggemann: Well I think it's both and. Obviously, Martin Luther King was exceptional and he was dispatched by God in a peculiar way and I think the same thing is true about William Barber now, but that doesn't let the rest of us off the hook. And, the same mandate is available to those of us who are less gifted and all that. We are entrusted with the same vision, with the same scriptural tradition, and with the same work to do. So, we cannot just turn it over to a few designated agents, I think. So, how do you think about special people and ordinary people in terms of prophetic practice?

Gilbert: Interestingly, I'm seeing it in Hip-Hop artists. I'm seeing artists like Lecrae, who's a Christian Hip-Hop artist. It's very controversial thing because he has long been a part of white evangelical...he's had a lot of white evangelical support to get his ministry on a national platform, but he's now disenchanted with white evangelicals who have clearly voted for Trump by and large 80 percent and who, for whatever reason, have become very silent about some of the issues or the things that are perpetuating injustice and the ills that we're currently seeing today. Even his music is shifting where he's merging prophetic criticism and hope. There are other artists who are not expressly Christian where you see these signs of the prophetic voice being exercised, but those voices are often muted because of materials and I'm very hopeful there are a number of ministers in my generation who pastor churches or who serve university congregations.

Brueggemann: So, when you think about prophetic hope, where does that take you?

Gilbert: My inclination is to think optimistically – optimism – but that's not quite it. I think hope is born out of suffering. It is this kind of... trying to understand and articulate what we believe God expects of God's human creation. Hope lies beyond...it's not pie in the sky. It's rooted in this courage that says, this is not all there is and we cannot settle for the goods of this world. And so, we're going to hope for a future that is beloved, where personhood is affirmed, where dignity is esteemed.

Brueggemann: I think that very many church people think that the now and the yet-to-come is like earth and heaven. And, that has to be corrected to say now and yet-to-come are this present socioeconomic, political system and a coming socioeconomic political system that will be congruent with God's reality. So, to get that model away from escape to heaven, it seems to me really important when we're trying to do futuring. So, I think the prophetic promises about beating their swords into plough shears and their spears into pruning hooks, not about going to heaven, but it's about a new socioeconomic arrangement and I think that very many of the ancient prophetic promises are about the re-ordering of the earth and I think too much Christian

hope has been escapism about going to heaven and being with my dead ones or something like that.

Gilbert: Wow, so you see this as God ultimately redeeming creation in the here and now.

Brueggemann: I do and I think that Jesus' parables are to that. The kingdom of heaven is like....well he didn't say it was like angels playing harps in heaven, but it's like having two sons, it's like a servant that gets paid the same way, it's very this worldly imagery that he used to characterize, so I've been thinking that at least in the gospel of Luke, which is the most radical, that the phrase "Kingdom of God" really means a new economic arrangement and when he says, "Repent for the Kingdom is at hand," he means reinvest in the new economy and things like that. How does that ring for you?

Gilbert: No, that's actually enlightening because I come out of the evangelical tradition where it is heaven and hell. And, I always kind of felt some pushback from my own community in trying to help folks become this worldly, but not worldly, if you will. It's... How do we transform this present environment such that you know these kinds of conversations can happen, and are we missing great opportunities? I think we are. I think we're distracted by technology: I think we're distracted because of this incessant information, the media cycle is constantly bombarding us with things that say to us, well, you know, somebody else can handle it. There's just so much to be done that why would we even make any effort?

Brueggemann: Which is why I think we have to stay very close to the story of Jesus because his vulnerable way of engagement was transformative so, as you know, when John asks him whether you're the messiah, he says "Well, I don't know, but did you notice that the blind see and the lame walk or the lepers are cleansed and the dead have their debts cancelled?" He said, "Something must be going on here."

Gilbert: That's good preaching.

Brueggemann: That's right. What kind of counsel do you give people who are thinking about a prophetic vocation?

Gilbert: To first become silent. And try to drown out the noise around us such that one can hear a voice outside of their own voice and having heard from God about where to start, to begin to develop coalitions, friends, sharing similar passions about what they want to see in the world and in doing so, filling in gaps for one another. I am now a black middle-class person enjoying certain privileges that I did not enjoy when I was a child and that many persons who live on the underside of life do not enjoy – and perhaps never will. If I'm hopeful though, I can hope that persons will find other channels or other groups of people who will help them to name their own reality and in naming that reality, find ways to serve God, serve their fellow brother or sister, in ways that gives dignity to one's own humanity.

Brueggemann: So, you would put the accent on collaboration and solidarity?

Gilbert: I think so. I think it takes the fear out of going it alone and being castigated by the masses and you know, I think there's no preacher, no African-American preacher, that wants to be assassinated as King... And so, when you talk about being fearless, I think we can get more accomplished if there are others who inspire our courage.

Brueggemann: But that kind of courage doesn't cancel out fear, does it? I mean you better be afraid.

Gilbert: Some holy fear! So, the persons that you find yourself in conversation with the most, what advice do you give them about being prophetic in these times?

Brueggemann: Well, I think we have to learn how to do social analysis better. We have to learn how to follow the money. We have to learn how to follow the money to see where it creates hurt. And white people at least, are not very good at social analysis, and do not want to be. And the other thing that I want to say to people in my tradition is, you've got to trust the biblical text. The biblical text is a huge truth speaker and a hope speaker. And, we can rely on it and I don't think we do very well at either one of those tasks.

Gilbert: What do you think are some of the biggest misconceptions about the prophetic role?

Brueggemann: Well, among liberals where I live, I think people think being prophetic is just nagging people about social justice and you wear people out nagging them and what that misses on the one hand is social analysis. You're just nagging about social justice if you don't do social analysis, and the other side of it is that prophetic faith is elementally hopeful that something better is intended by God and will come to fruition. That generally is missed among liberals about being prophetic...I'm so glad to have met you and to get to talk with you.

Gilbert: Thank you, Professor Brueggemann. I likewise am very appreciative for this moment. I shall cherish it.

Brueggemann: Thank you.

- ◆ **Embracing new arrivals helps Australia evolve**

Vincent Long Van Nguyen, bishop of the Church of Parramatta, 24th June 2021

Concern for migrants and refugees has been a key theme of Pope Francis' pontificate – both in word and in action. His first pastoral visit outside of Rome as Pope was to the Italian island of Lampedusa. It is the entry point to Europe for many people seeking asylum and migrants arriving by boat without authorisation, seeking safety and a better life.



There Francis lamented the globalisation of indifference to the suffering of our sisters and brothers. He cared more about their suffering than their legal status. More recently, in his encyclical letter, *On Fraternity and Social Friendship*, Francis described a lack of respect for human dignity at borders as a 'dark cloud over a closed world'. He called instead for open societies that welcome and include everyone in need or in search of a better life.

Francis believes that we can emerge from this pandemic better than before if we act with awareness that we are one family. The pandemic reminds us that no matter how we arrived in a community, we are all in the same boat. The truth is that no one can be saved alone. We can take this historic opportunity to rebuild better, greener and with greater inclusion. That knowledge equips us to avoid both excessive individualism and the aggressive populism that thrives on identifying enemies at home and abroad. 'Fraternity,' the pope insists, 'is the new frontier', capable of knitting together the often competing demands of liberty and equality.

Of course, during a pandemic, we cannot always keep our borders open; we can, though, keep our hearts and minds open to the whole world. In fact, pandemic-induced border closures have shown us how much Australians benefit from freedom of movement, and how much migrants contribute to our society and economy. As we miss our freedom to travel, let us think of people whose movement is not so freely chosen.

At present, around 7,000 people who have already been assessed as requiring protection, and granted a visa under the offshore humanitarian program, are currently unable to travel to safety in Australia. Nor are there effective pathways to reach Australia, even with authorisation, to apply for asylum onshore. People seeking asylum and refugees already in Australia also face challenges.

Department of Home Affairs statistics show that, as of 30 April 2021, the average length of detention for the 1,497 people in immigration detention was 646 days. This is higher than ever before. This figure includes some people who have committed serious crimes and who will be returned to their country of citizenship. But it also includes a growing number of people who are in complex situations. Some of them may not be eligible for refugee status but can never be safely returned to their country of origin, yet they pose low levels of risk to the community.

We experience people seeking asylum, migrants and refugees not as an imposition or problem to be solved, but as sisters and brothers to be welcomed, protected, included and promoted.

We need to find better ways to resolve their situations. As a community, we should not rush to judgement, presuming that anyone who does not meet the strict Refugee Convention definition of a refugee has no legitimate moral claim on our assistance at all. The reality of contemporary flows of human movement are far more complex than that, and our policy framework needs to evolve to address such situations more effectively, rather than leaving so many people with complex cases to languish in detention, or to appeal to ministerial discretion. It is not simple, but it is also not impossible.

The Catholic Church defends human life. Anyone who is forced to flee to protect their lives or human dignity has a moral claim on our assistance, whether they are a Convention refugee or not. It is what we would want from others if we were in their place.

With the average length of detention in Australia now at an historic high, it is timely to review how immigration detention is used. It should be a last resort that is used for the shortest practicable time so that people who pose little risk to the community are not unnecessarily deprived of their liberty, and that they are able to contribute to the community.

This is not naïve or impractical; Canada's average length of detention in 2019-2020 was just 13.9 days. Imagine the human and financial costs that could be avoided if our average length of immigration detention was two weeks?

We already have working alternatives to detention. Community detention arrangements and release into the community on Bridging Visa E could be used more extensively. In this regard, the release of the Murugappan family from detention on Christmas Island is a welcome development. International experience may also suggest other workable alternatives to immigration detention.

Migrants and refugees need support to settle into their new home. Here, both the community and government have a role to play. In an example that is close to home for me, the experience of the Vietnamese boat people provides clear evidence that even a highly traumatised group can be integrated in our multicultural society and can make a positive contribution. The fear that our social cohesion might be undermined by newcomers has been proven unfounded again and again by successive waves of migrants and refugees. By embracing new arrivals, Australia has evolved to become a much more dynamic, diverse and prosperous nation.

The Catholic community, through its various organisations and structures, is very active in visiting people in immigration detention, and in supporting asylum-seekers and refugees in the community. Those who are on bridging visas or temporary visas are not eligible for a range of government supports for people facing economic hardship due to the pandemic. Along with other charities and community-based organisations, we are working hard to assist these vulnerable people.

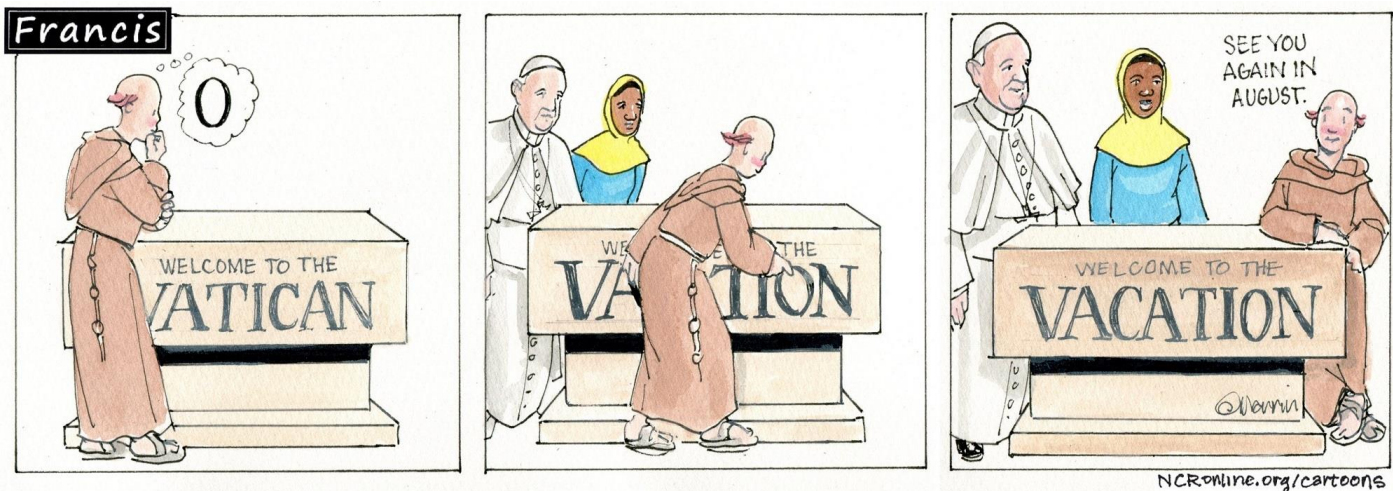
We are ready to work with governments to welcome and include many more of the world's displaced people. We experience people seeking asylum, migrants and refugees not as an imposition or problem to be solved, but as sisters and brothers to be welcomed, protected, included and promoted.

Our encounter with people seeking asylum, migrants and refugees enriches our lives and provides us with an opportunity to work together for a better world. Their initiative, resilience and creativity make Australia a better place.

As Pope Francis says in his message for Migrant and Refugee Sunday this year — 'they' make 'us' a greater 'we'. There are no longer 'others', but only a 'we' as wide as humanity.

Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv STL DD is the Catholic bishop of the Parramatta Diocese in Western Sydney and Chair of the Bishops Commission for Social Justice, Mission and Service within the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

7. FRANCIS, THE COMIC STRIP by Pat Marrin – 1st July 2021.



NCR Editor's note: Pat Marrin, the cartoonist behind Francis, the comic strip, is taking the month of July off. Francis and his friends will be back in August.

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