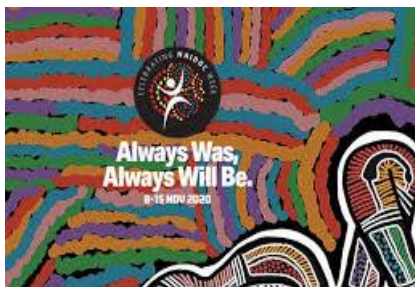


JPIC 100 – NOVEMBER 2020

Health in the Lord and the Blessing of the Holy Spirit..[Rule of Saint Albert]  
Saudavel iha Maromak no grasa Spirtu Santo Nian .. [Regula Sto Alberto]

This month's reflection is prepared for us by  
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**National NAIDOC Week 2020  
celebrations will be held  
from the 8-15 November.**

The National NAIDOC Committee (NNC) postponed NAIDOC Week from the original July dates due to the impacts and uncertainty from the escalating Coronavirus pandemic across our communities and cities.

The postponement was aimed at protecting our elders and those in our communities with chronic health issues from the disastrous impacts of COVID19.



## Black Lives Matter

In recent months, the killing of George Floyd by police in the USA has propelled the Black Lives Matter Movement into the media spotlight. It effectively raised the profile of systemic racism here in Australia as exemplified by the growing number of deaths in custody, 437 at the date of writing. Rallies held across Australia, notably in Melbourne at the commencement of COVID 19 have subsequently been seen by some as contributing to the spread of the virus. It didn't but that hasn't stopped those who wish to vilify others having their say.

**BLM as an African American** movement, is addressing African American issues. It does not include or address American First Nations Peoples, Latino's or other minorities and has little in common with the situation here for our First Nations peoples. One addresses the issues of slavery and the ongoing impact of being taken from your country and reduced to the role of a chattel without rights in another's land; the other addresses the impacts of colonial genocide on a people whose land was stolen, people who still inhabit their country without the rights that pertain to citizenship.

**Race has become identified with**

skin pigment and those with darker skin are further from the European normal. Skin pigment is a poor way to identify place, power and rights within any society but has been and is the basis for much of what we describe as racism.

**The BLM does highlight** something both groups share – systemic racism. Often when taking about racism we reduce it to the particular or the individual. The examples we most often hear have to do with what an individual has said or done, and there are many examples. The vilification of Adam Goodes is a recent example where the focus was on one young person's inappropriate comment which was repeated in various ways by other individuals. What was not addressed in this incident and by the subsequent media frenzy and even the documentaries on the case was what enabled such comments to be said and to be continue to be said?

**Much of what we discuss as** racism or racist is at best discrimination on the basis of arbitrary social mores which have their source in systemic violence. The question is not why police target black people at the local level, but what is the systemic bias which is embedded

in the system they belong to which allows them to behave this way. The question then becomes how do I empower such a system? Is it because I cherish my privilege and are unwilling to share it or give it up?

**A good example** of this is the Closing the Gap program which reduces Aboriginal people to a set of statistics and only measures success if we (Aboriginal people) close the gap up (vertical and aspirational) by getting better at all the things that matter to non-Aboriginal people. Some may argue that better health, education, job and housing outcomes are good for First Nations People. They are but they must be accompanied by an equal attempt to close the gap down (vertical and compassionate) through the giving up of privilege (law for

one - those who have arrived as 'settlers') and the returning of that which was stolen.

**This year's Naidoc week theme, 'Always Was, Always Will Be',** reminds us of the uncomfortable truth at the heart of our struggle. Our country is more than simply the provider of sustenance in material terms. It is the holder of all that gives us our place in this place. When we are able to live in harmony with it as people indigenous of the universe in a custodial relationship with all our cousins (all created beings) then we have enough for our existence, and we are home.

**Regardless of whether there is a Treaty** or not this land, my country, will always be my Mother, the source of all meaning and hope and the

means by which we can live in harmony with each other. If those who came here later give up their need to subjugate it for productive purposes and listen, they will find their place here on our country which will always hold and care for all of us.

**This theme challenges the basis** of systemic racism by reminding us that we belong to the land and not it to us. It reminds that to live in relationship with this land we are to listen to its foundational lore, of belonging to each other in a relationship of responsibility and reciprocity. Here we will learn who we are responsible to and who is responsible for us. It will show us that privilege damages all these relationships and, if we wish to stay on country, we have to change our inherited racial biases

**AN ABORIGINAL BLESSING** by Brooke Prentis (Common Grace – [click here for website](#) )

*May our footsteps, on these ancient lands,  
remind us of creation and connectedness, in our search for truth.*

*May the Gum Tree, from its roots to its branches,  
remind us to dig deep and reach high, in our action for justice.*

*May the Eagle, who soars in the sky,  
remind us of the power, in our call for love.*

*May the expanse of the lands and seas, of the sky and stars,  
remind us of God's timing in our faith in hope.*

*May the Holy three, Creator Spirit, Lord God, Papa Jesus,  
remind us of community.*

*So with grace, mercy, and peace, go in truth, justice, love and hope.*

#### **FOR YOUR CALENDAR – NOVEMBER**

9 Nov – Opening of the Berlin Wall

12 Nov – Dili Massacre, Timor Leste when 271 people were killed 1991

15 Nov – World Day of the Poor

20 Nov – Universal Children's Day –adoption by UN of Declaration of Rights of the Child 1959

25 Nov – International Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women –UN Declaration 1981

28 Nov – Timor Leste Independence from Portugal - 1975

29 Nov – International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

29 Nov – Meeting of St John Paul II with Indigenous People in Alice Springs 1986

## GETTING TO KNOW YOUR CARMELITE JPIC TEAM



*This year we celebrate 10 years of the Carmelite JPIC Commission in its present form. This month we introduce you to another of our JPIC Team, Agedo Bento O.Carm*



### **AGEDO ... "Why do I believe in social justice? What is my motivation for being involved with social justice?"**

I believe in social justice because of my faith in a just God; a God who stands for truth; a Creator who is fair, compassionate, gentle, caring and loving. I have arrived at this position because I believe that God created everything out of love and entrusted all creation to our stewardship.

Freedom is at the core of social justice, a freedom that is inherent in humankind. In scripture, God comes to free the captive (Ga. 4: 5; Jer. 34:8) and the prisoners (Lk 4:18). Because of human weakness we become trapped in sin; we can become greedy, dishonest and wasteful, especially towards creation.

Although all of us are sinful, God gives us the dignity of free will, to choose between what is good and what is bad. God has given us the power to free ourselves from what is bad and encourages us to work for a good and just world. Justice is above all bringing freedom to the world and freedom requires us to live a life that is loving and fair. In this way we free ourselves from darkness and enter into the light of the Kingdom of justice and love which God has shown us in Jesus.

Psalms 89 reads, "Your kingdom is ruled by justice and fairness with love and faithfulness leading the way. (PS 89: 14). Social justice demands freedom for where there is no freedom there is hatred; where there is hatred there is no love.

### A SACRED COMMITMENT ... FAITH for NATURE Multi Faith CONFERENCE

During October Lay Carmelite Toto Olito from Perth took part in an online global conference sponsored by the Icelandic Government, the United Nations Environmental Programme and several Interfaith religious organisations. *"I attended nearly all the sessions. I think we can do so much from our perspective as community members. Some of the highlights for me were":*

- ✚ Insights into the greening projects run in countries like Japan, where they have programs such as planting trees (engaging with youth in universities, young people to create awareness), mangrove plantations; community forests.
- ✚ There was emphasis on the need to work together with local, national and international organisations.
- ✚ Take practical steps in order to address the concerns we face as a globe. I think we can do this in our local communities for example by encouraging practices such as recycling and ensuring that we do not waste food, and adopting a simpler lifestyle.
- ✚ Use media to create awareness about environmental protection; embracing indigenous wisdom on ways to protect nature; example, the Indigenous people in the Amazon and Australia "The land does not belong to us, we belong to the land"
- ✚ Develop linkage between science and faith by creating awareness, dialogue and understanding.
- ✚ Encourage members of the community to learn about technology and science surrounding environmental protection and climate change; example the Buddhist monks in Cambodia learning how to operate cameras and other scientific tools to enable them to monitor forest cover etc.
- ✚ Faith based organisations (FBOs) have often been sidelined in the international arena, but now change is coming - more needs to be done in this space. FBOs have connections with communities on ground and this provides opportunity to engage people through education and awareness. FBOs instil values that promote behaviour change (an untapped potential i believe)
- ✚ Stop being only a passive worker or bystander. We are the voice of moral accountability.
- ✚ Faith communities can invest in renewable technologies

<https://faithfornature.org/>