

Because of her, we can!



Last Sunday, July 1, the Catholic Church celebrated **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday** – a feature of the liturgical calendar for almost 30 years and a chance to celebrate the contributions and gifts of Australia’s First Peoples. This year’s theme from the Australian Bishops “Because of her, we can”, drew upon the theme of NAIDOC week (Sunday 8 July to Sunday 15 July).

In its annual message, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference praised the role of women, especially mothers and grandmothers, in the life of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It also spoke of the role model of the Virgin Mary in the life of the Catholic Church.

“And yet mothers, like Mary, the Mother of the Church, in their maternal mission assist others to rise above the tragedies and tribulations of life in the knowledge that greater moments await us.”

NAIDOC Week highlights that “as pillars of our society, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have played – and continue to play - active and significant roles at the community, local, state and national levels”.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have:

- > marched, protested and spoken at demonstrations and national gatherings for the proper recognition of our rights and calling for national reform and justice.
- > cared for our families, maintained our homes and broken down cultural and institutionalised barriers and gender stereotypes.
- > demanded a better life, greater opportunities and - in many cases equal rights - for our children, our families and our people.
- > been pioneering women who continue to be trailblazers

Their achievements, their voice, their unwavering passion give us strength and have empowered past generations and paved the way for generations to come (<http://www.naidoc.org.au/get-involved/2018-theme>).

Because of her, we can!

*Lead us on, Great Spirit, as we gather from the four corners of the earth;
enable us to walk together in trust from the hurt and shame of the past
into the full day which has dawned in Jesus Christ.
Amen.*

– Extract from prayer by Lenore Parker. Used with permission.

References: ACBC Video Message – https://youtu.be/kgWfyI7_YQw;
PDF of Bishops’ message for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday – <https://goo.gl/SAjhtT>

REFLECTION

- > How are women significant in your ministry?
- > In what ways can your ministry support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women?