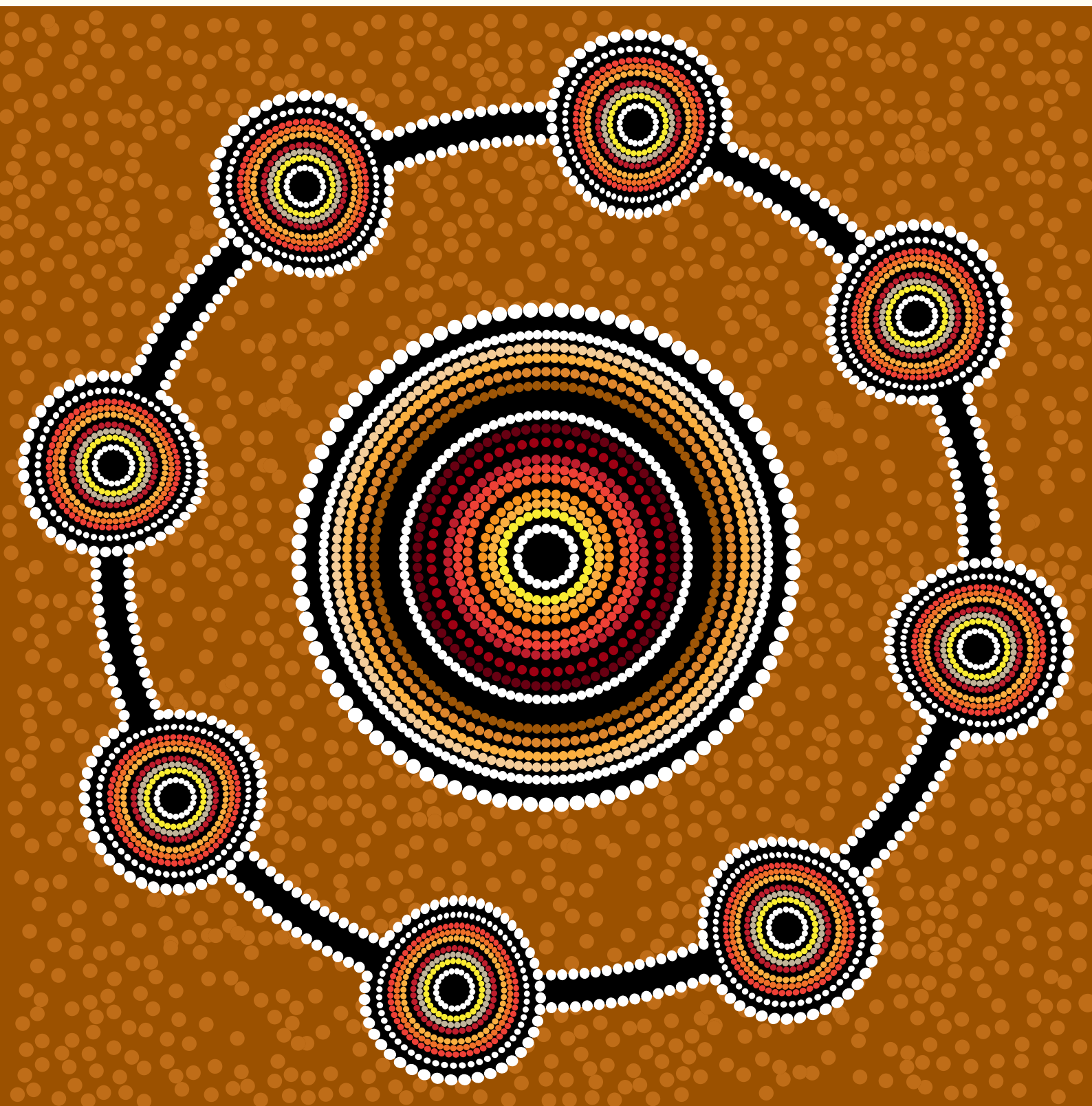


What is the Spirit asking of us and our Catholic Church?



A Yarning Circle reflection to assist communities in contributing to the Plenary Council Listening Process.



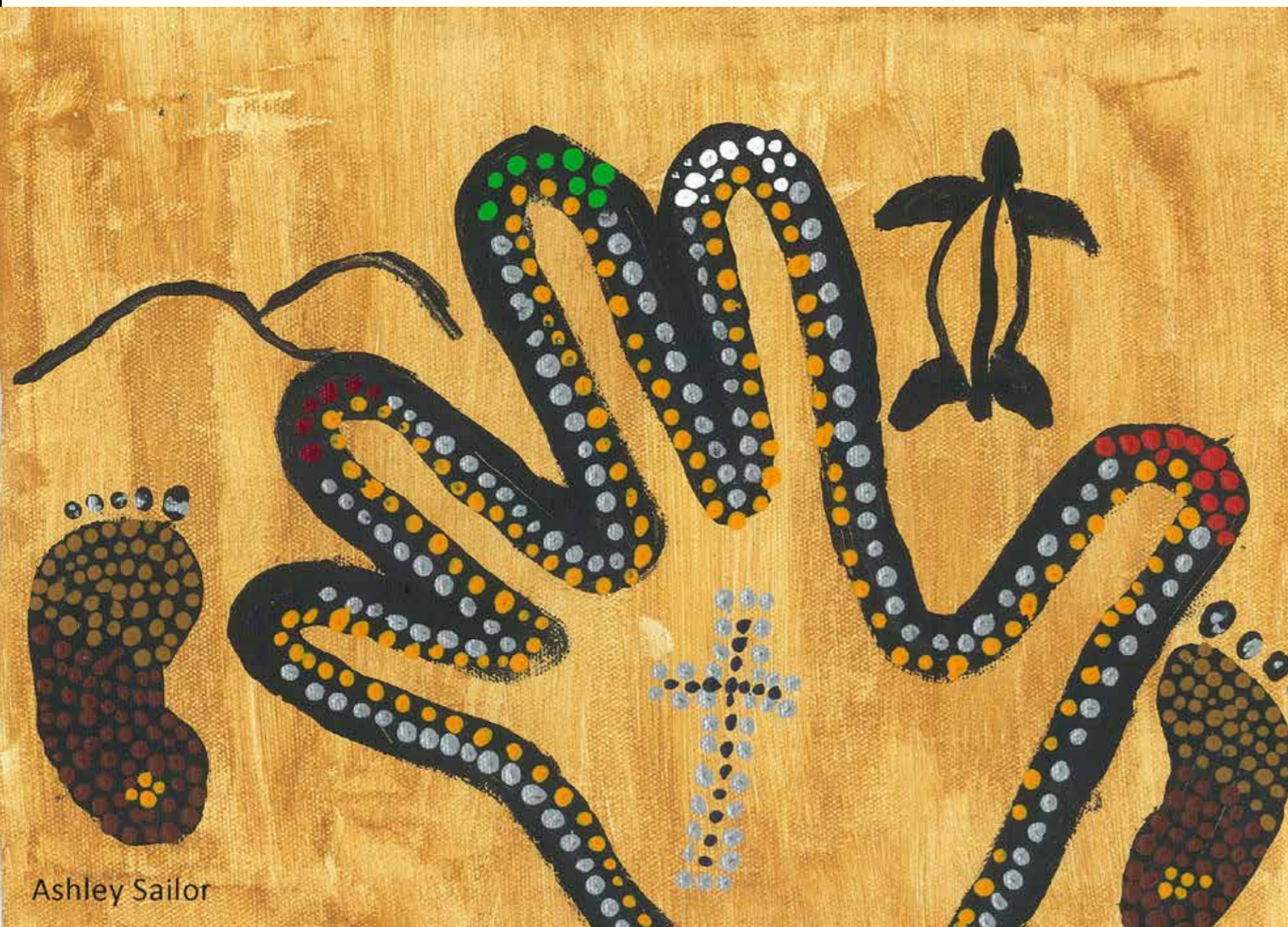
Yarning Circles are a very effective means of discussion and can also be used by non Indigenous Communities for Plenary consultations. The process used will be the same, however using reflections appropriate for the group.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics now number over 130,000 and have much to offer the Church in Australia. The cultural gifts of faith, spirituality and the importance of family provide a unique perspective from which to share experiences, suggestions and wisdom to the Plenary Council.

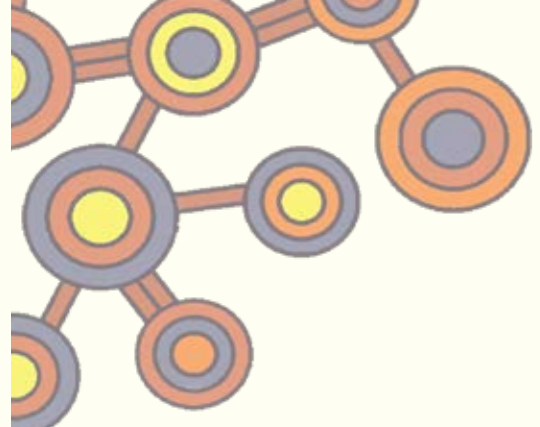
We have called this process **What is the Spirit asking of us and our Catholic Church?** because we need to be part of the change and not leave it to others. It is our responsibility to make our voices heard, just as it is the responsibility of our Church to listen and respect our voice.

The Yarning Circle method has been used for this reflection because it is a proven and appropriate method of discussion and decision making within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. Very similar methods have been used by other Indigenous people around the world for thousands of years.

By forming a yarning circle, the group is committing to creating a collective that is bigger than the sum of its parts. Each individual is an important member of the circle and every voice is important. Used correctly, yarning circles create an atmosphere of respect and a willingness to share with one another.



Ashley Sailor



PRAY

Recite the Prayer of the Aboriginal people as a group.

Father of all, you gave us the Dreaming
 You have spoken to us through our beliefs
 You then made your love clear to us in the person of Jesus
 We thank you for your care
 You own us
 You are our hope
 Make us strong as we face the problems of change
 We ask you to help the people of Australia to listen to us and respect our culture
 Make the knowledge of you grow strong in all people
 So that you can be at home in us and we can make a home for everyone in our land.



PREPARE

FIND a quiet and special place. You can do this outside.

FORM a Yarning circle around a special symbol that represents both culture and Catholic faith. It could be a Cross, painting, photo or anything else that will centre the spirit of the group.

Appoint 1 or 2 people to act as scribes and a facilitator to note down your discussions and lead the session.

Yarn

1. Form a circle with enough space between each participant.
2. Place your item or artifact in the middle of the circle and explain that the item is a symbol of both culture and the Church.
3. Explain that a yarning circle is a method of discussion and decision making that has been used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for thousands of years and that all participants are equal.
4. All participants should place themselves in state of respectful deep listening and openness.
5. Begin the selected reflection using the suggested method on page 8
6. In silence, contemplate **What is the Spirit asking of us and our Catholic Church?** You do not need to set a specific time of silence as the Spirit takes time to move within us. Wait until everyone is ready to share before beginning the discussion.
7. The circle now examines their own experiences of the Church in light of the reflection.

These discussions might raise everyday issues that do not relate directly to the reflection however they emerge because of the mutual confidence that now exists in an atmosphere in the presence of God.

Act

The facilitator to share what they have heard. **It is important that these words reflect the discussions and that all participants are satisfied.**

Together, decide how you want your input to be shared with the Plenary Council. There are no rules and your input can be in the form of:

- o A painting
- o Written report
- o A prayer
- o A song
- o A video or audio recording
- o Anything else that represents your feelings and outcomes

Submit

Submit online at www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au or mail to Plenary Council Team – PO Box 747 North Sydney NSW 2059

The team at NATSICC are happy to assist with your submission. Either call 08 8363 2963 or email craig@natsicc.org.au



REFLECTIONS

Three reflection pieces have been provided. Two are included in this booklet. The third is an online reflection that can be accessed at www.natsicc.org.au/2020plenary

You can use one of the three reflections per session, a combination of the three or (if time and energy allows) all three.

1. Read or view the reflection together
2. The Facilitator asks –
What is the Spirit asking of us and our Catholic Church?

The reflection is read or viewed again.

A Traditional Voice

Deacon Boniface Perdjert shares his vision of bringing together Church and Culture.



Corinthians 12: 12-31
One of the most famous pictures of the unity of the Church ever written.

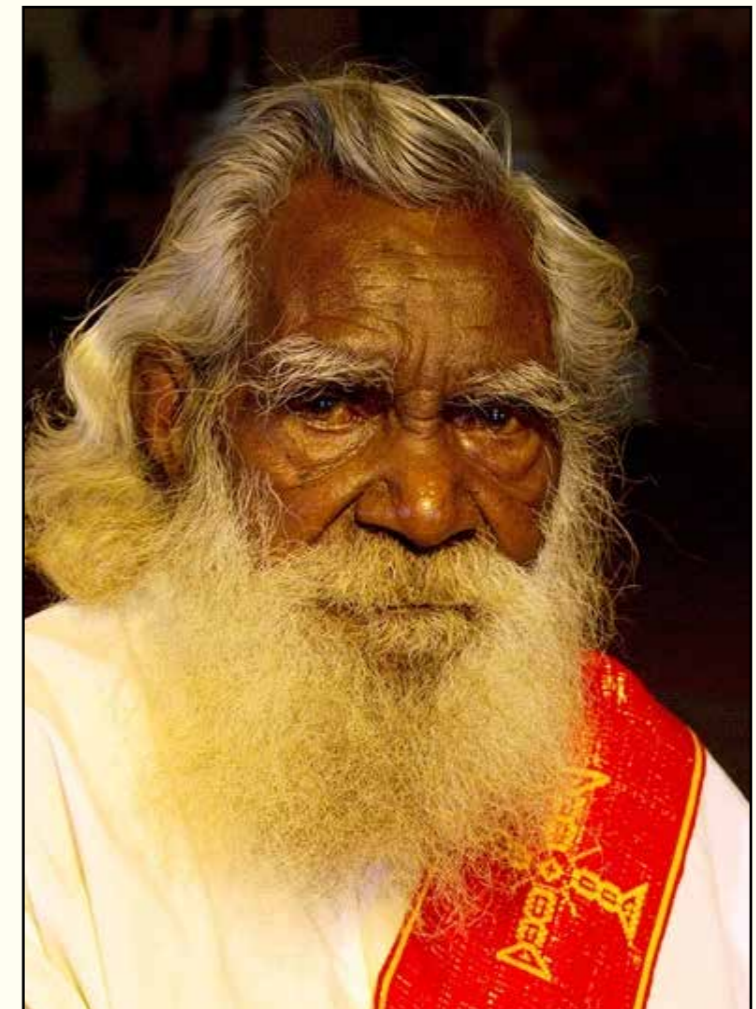
Visual ONLINE reflection
This presentation uses St. John Paul II's words to nurture reflection.



ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER VIEWS ARE WARNED THAT THE PRESENTATION MAY CONTAIN IMAGES AND VOICES OF THOSE THAT HAVE PASSED.

REFLECTION 1 A TRADITIONAL VOICE

DEACON Boniface is senior elder of the Kardu Diminin clan and Murrinhpatha language speaker and the traditional owner of the land on which the town of Wadeye (Port Keats) is built.



Let me tell you how important and necessary it is to proceed and strengthen our Culture in our Catholic Faith. I see remedy for what is going wrong coming from inspiration and the strength of the faith.

The faith will bring us together the faith will shelter us and let us listen to ourselves and to one another at the very deep level. The faith will encourage us, enlighten us and strengthen us to share and minister to one another. We belong to the faith, it will make us one family.

As I said earlier as a Deacon, it became my duty to bring the faith church and the culture together. I know Jesus did not come to destroy the Culture, he came to fulfil it. His spirit allows all to reflect in their own Cultural way.

What is good grows stronger and what is bad grows weaker and hopefully disappears so people of Culture can become strong.

REFLECTION 2

Scripture

UNITY AND DIVERSITY IN THE BODY

COR. 12: 12-21

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body.

If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!”

COMMENTARY (COMMUNITY BIBLE)

Facilitators may use this commentary as an additional tool to inspire discussion

We are one body in Jesus and must place our talents at the service of others.

A detailed comparison with the body helps us to understand what the Church is, showing at the same time how we must complement and respect each other.

We cannot have a true community unless each of us shares in its life placing our talents at the service of others. Even the most humble, poor and uneducated Christian may have riches of a moral or artistic order,

with which he/she is able to serve his/her brothers and sisters.


As soon as one is really committed to a Christian life the Spirit awakens in him new and sometimes unsuspected capabilities.


If we pay attention to the riches of our brothers and sisters and awaken in them the consciousness of their dignity and responsibility, we shall see a new resurgence in the Church, fruit of the Spirit.

REFLECTION 3

Online Reflection



 **What is the Spirit asking of us and our Catholic Church?**
A visual reflection for use by communities for 2020 Plenary Council consultations

 Plenary Council 2020
Listen to what the Spirit is saying.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander viewers are advised that this presentation may contain the images and voices of those that have passed.

NATSICC has produced an online reflection for groups to use as a Yarning Circle reflection. The reflection uses imagery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics sharing gifts of culture with the Church. The paintings, celebrations and rituals included in the reflection depict the richness, colour and authenticity of spirit that Australia’s First people contribute to the Australian Catholic Church.

On each slide, a quote from St John Paul II’s address to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Alice Springs (1986) is overlaid to encourage thought on how traditional ways can enrich the Church.

The reflection can be accessed at www.natsicc.org.au/2020plenary

NATSICC has created a mailing list for communities to join so that they can stay updated on the 2020 Plenary Consultations. It is also an avenue for communities to share their thoughts on the Plenary, connect with other communities and to provide input directly to the Plenary Council.

Email admin@natsicc.org.au to be added to the list.



Community and Ministry Connect

Fostering a national network of Catholic
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups

