



## Washing one another's Feet

***An invitation to critically reflect on JPIC and our relationships of power – in this instance by raising awareness of social justice issues affecting Indigenous people in our Province.***

*"We have been witness to the healing capacity and redemptive value of power, especially when it is put at the service of reconciliation and love. Together, we believe that another world, where everyone has a place of dignity and respect, is possible". (Being Artisans of Hope, P.5)*

*As we commence this reflection and in the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge the indigenous peoples of our two countries and their connections to land, sea, and community. We pay our respects to the elders and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Maori people.*

*In the words of Stephanie Dowrick we pray:*

- ✚ That every Australian and New Zealander - from wherever they come - discovers with interest, enthusiasm, and pride how much there is to learn from the breathtakingly ancient, subtle, unifying cultures of Indigenous Australia and New Zealand.
- ✚ That every Indigenous person experiences the honouring of their original culture AND their unique place in our shared culture of today.
- ✚ That we introduce into daily life Indigenous customs that our First Nations Peoples are willing to share. NZ/Aotearoa gives us the most wonderful example of the unifying of cultures.

*"We've recently acknowledged the 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Apology to the Stolen Generations, the Apology important because it acknowledged and expressed sorrow for the deep personal pain the removal of children from their families causes". (Andrew Hamilton - Editor of Eureka Street).*

The indigenous story is one of endurance, resistance, guarding of culture and language, organisation, pride, and constant struggle for justice. However, many issues of injustice continue to impact the lives of our indigenous people.

Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr Baumann AM, in her acceptance speech as Senior Australian of the Year 2021 said, *"..since we have adapted to a new way of living, we have learned to speak your language, for years we have walked on a one way street to learn the white people's way. I've learned to live in two worlds....Now is the time for you to come closer to understand us, to understand how we live and listen to what the needs are in our communities".* Such a heartfelt challenge she puts to us. ***We must ask ourselves how can we respond?***

***Are our societal structures respectful of every person?*** If not, then it is essential that we are part of the effort to change the attitudes that discriminate against or devalue the lives of our Indigenous brothers and sisters.

***How then, can I be part of this effort? What action can I commit to, in support of this attitudinal change?***

An important way we can be involved, can move forward, is to stand with our First Nations people and support the Uluru Statement from the Heart, delivered to the Australian people in 2017, after extensive dialogue with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The Uluru Statement calls for structural reform including constitutional change. **A First Nations Voice to Parliament** would be a representative body giving Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders a say in law and policy affecting them.

**Practical ways we can be involved:**

- ✚ Education and awareness raising of the many human rights issues facing Indigenous Australians.
- ✚ Read the Uluru Statement from the Heart. [www.ulurustatement.org](http://www.ulurustatement.org)
- ✚ Support the call for a constitutionally enshrined First Nations Voice to Parliament.
- ✚ Consider preparing a submission calling for a Voice to Parliament with all that that implies of treaty and truth telling. [www.fromtheheart.com.au](http://www.fromtheheart.com.au)

Should you wish to access further information on any of the above, you might like to contact one of us (see below). We would welcome your responses – [mission@anzrscj.com.au](mailto:mission@anzrscj.com.au)

**Esmey Herscovitch – 0405 658 812**

**Mary Shanahan – 0408 862 010**

**Christine Hannon – 0415 691 605**

**Bev Neill – 0409 081 627**