

Reconciliation Week 2022

Prayers

This is a collection of prayers for reconciliation written over the years by Jon Humphries, Ravenswood Chaplain and Religious Education Teacher.

How Do We Reconcile So Much Tragedy?

God of healing and reconciliation,
There is so much that has been done
There is so much that has been said
There is so much hurt that has been inflicted
There is so much anger and frustration that exists
There is so much hate and enmity
There is so much bitterness and resentment

The pain runs so deep.

So much has been lost.

The damage is irreparable

The past can never be reclaimed

No compensation can be enough.

No apology can make it right.

God of healing and reconciliation,

The past cannot be changed or undone.

But the future is yet to be written

The present is ripe with choice.

Can we find respect?

Dare we leave behind the comfort of our prejudice and ignorance?

Can we step beyond the confines of our culture and seek understanding?

Do we have the strength and courage to open ourselves to have compassion for the other?

Might forgiveness flood the barren spaces of unresolved antagonism?

God of healing and reconciliation,

Lead us into a new tomorrow,

Beyond empty words and token gestures.

Transform our brokenness into something new.

May promises be redeemed for action.

Let change be real and not only hoped for.

God of creative love and justice,

Bring healing and reconciliation,

Somehow fix this awful mess that we find ourselves in.

Empower us with the will and the way to make a difference.

In the spirit of renewal may this be so.

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A Prayer of Lament and for Reconciliation

(Prayer in response to Kanyini - present by Bob Randall is Yankunytjatjara Elder - Traditional custodians of Ulhuru and surrounding lands)

Lord of Grace

It was not me, but it was my people

It is not part of my experience, but is part of my story

It is not my fault, but I am partly to blame.

Can there ever be enough grace to bring healing to our aboriginal people?

Can there ever be enough forgiveness to bring reconciliation?

We are broken and less because of the brokenness and lessening of our aboriginal brothers and sisters.

For this I am sorry.

I mourn their loss.

The loss of Belief, Spirituality, Land, Family, culture

I am sorry for our people.

I am sorry for the past

I am sorry for the present

I am sorry for the future, even though I hope that we may work to make it better

I am sorry for the systematic erosion of kanyini - the connectedness

I am sorry for the romma romma - madness of selfish, hypocritical practices and that have disenfranchised our aboriginal people

For the massacre of life

For the bringing of death

For the rejection and breaking of oneness

For the failure of compassion

For the chaos and sadness that our aboriginal people are left with as a legacy and inheritance -

Stuck between two cultures, stuck between two worlds, stuck between two times

Stuck between the past and the future

I lament the sad reality that the people who lived in the present are now stuck in a present that should never have been.

God of Justice, bring justice

God of hope, bring hope.

God of reconciliation, stir in us the change that might open the way for reconciliation.

Jesus, who is the way, show us the way.

Jesus, who is the life, lead us into better life.

Jesus, who is the truth, open us to the truth.

Gracious God, Help us make things right.

This we pray.

Amen.

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A Humbling Prayer of Confession for Reconciliation

God of Grace
Spirit of Reconciliation
Christ of Forgiveness,
How can reconciliation be possible?
It was not us, but it was our people
Our ancestors have done so much to the first peoples of this land.
They brought disconnectedness to a people who were fully connected to the land and each other
They brought disease which decimated health
They brought selfishness into a land of selflessness and sharing
They brought arrogant superiority where there was humility and equality
They brought disharmony where there was equilibrium
They brought confusion, where there was clarity
They brought brokenness where there was wholeness
Some brought good intentions, but others brought prejudice and hypocrisy
Many brought religion, but did not bring God
Many named Jesus, but left his way behind.
It was not us, but it was our people
It is part of our story
Their truth must be faced
Our truth must be owned
The hurt must be felt and acknowledged
The pain must be shared
For we bear the legacy and inheritance of their past.
The sorry of compassion does not seem to cut it, but it is a step.
Help us to walk further the difficult journey into truth and acknowledgement.
The past is gone.
The ancient ways have been cut off or obstructed
Lead us to a place of understanding where we, the first and next peoples of this land, might begin to
walk together into a better future.
Resource us with deep wisdom, strong compassion, endless grace, powerful courage, limitless
respect and the wellsprings of your love
That we might build new connections and new directions as we struggle together through the
tangles of the past.
God who is life be with us
Spirit of the Truth speak into us
Christ who is the way guide us.
Work within us and with us to make this so.
Amen

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A Prayer of Hope

In the name of reconciliation and hope,

We hope for a better today and a better tomorrow together.

We acknowledge the pain of the past, as well as the hurt and frustration of many our Aboriginal sisters and brothers in the present.

We take time to notice and understand the injustice.

But with hope, we look towards more positive things to come as we continue on the journey into reconciliation.

Help us to own our part in the story.

May we never be complacent about the need to work for justice.

Give us the courage to act in ways that we can to work for change and improvement.

There is so much to be done and there are big obstacles that seem to be in the way.

Inspire us to think creatively that we might find ways to right wrongs and lay strong foundations for a hopeful future.

Help us to work together to make our contribution for improvement.

I pray this in the name of the reconciling one.

Amen

(Note: This prayer was written for a local reconciliation event run by a local council. As there is sometimes a level of antipathy with some aboriginal people towards Christianity, given the role of the Church in some missions, this prayer intentionally does not explicitly reference Christ or God - but it maintains integrity through fairly unsubtle implied references.)

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As we continue to journey into reconciliation

God of hope,
The past is hard to admit.
The present is hard to accept.
The truth is hard to own.
For some it just awakens hurt and frustration.
For some it evokes shame and guilt, or at least it should.
Open our hearts to hear the stories.
Inspire us to dream of better ways
Bring us into communion that we might be reconciled,
To work together to overcome the obstacles,
And create a future of justice and equity
Where all may live and love with peace and respect.
In the name of the one who reconciles,
May this be so.
Amen

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Damaged - A Prayer of Confession and Reconciliation

Lord of the people, Spirit in this land, Christ of justice, Our people are damaged.
Our First Peoples suffer in the wake of a history which should not have been,

A history which resulted in

Their people killed or dying

Their wellbeing infected and dissolved

Their culture attacked and eroded

Their children stolen or snatched

Their family life shattered and shredded

Their land divvied up and despoiled

Their way of life polluted and poisoned

Their wisdom insulted and ignored

Their pride eroded and soiled

Their spirituality attacked and subverted

Their sovereignty transgressed

Their heritage robbed and ruined

Their humanity denied

Whether it was Well-intentioned but, ignorant and misguided,

Or deliberate and malicious, It was wrong.

The treatment by Europeans of First Peoples of this land has damaged the fabric of their being,
And the legacy of that history continues to affect their life in this day and times.

The damage was not only done, but continues to be done

Therefore, we have much to be sorry for as a country.

May we all work for reconciliation.

Awake in our nation a desire for repentance.

Let us Own the past in truth, Lament the damage done, Understand the pain experienced
And join with our indigenous sisters and brothers in their sorrow.

May we work to turn what can be around.

May we seek to learn from them and support them in their healing.

May we look to their empowerment.

May we do what is right.

Lord of the people, The damage has be done,

But may we work together for a better future

Learning from our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people what needs to be addressed,
That all might find peace and healing as a nation under your love.

In your grace, Christ one,

We pray.

Amen.

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Prayers

Grounded in Truth, Walking Together in Courage

God of all,
Watcher and dreamer of all people,
Source of care, compassion and justice,
Keeper

The story of the First Peoples shines bright in this land,
For tens of thousands of years it the light burnt strong,
Deep culture, Deep language, Deep spirituality
Efficient technology, Sustainable living
Like an extension of the Garden of Eden

Then things changed,
Whether well-meaning or ill-meaning,
Whether selfish or ignorant

The coming of subsequent peoples to this land
Has wrought wrong
Harm has been done
Right left undone

And the First Peoples have suffered and continue to suffer.
Though the story is not all bad and there is good within it,
With courage we face the truths that are saddening and upsetting.

We give thanks for the First Peoples of this land.

We recognise now their ancient sovereignty

We celebrate their wisdom.

We seek to learn from their custodianship.

We are sorry for the loss of land, language, culture and story.

We are sorry for the suffering

But we are thankful for those who work together
Who listen to each other with courage and respect,
And seek to work together in reconciliation.

Help us to be such people,

May we open ourselves to the truth both good and ill
And commit to working and walking together with courage

That we might walk together,

Reconciled to a better future for all people.

This we pray.

Amen

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Prayers

Reconciliation Sunday

As we gather, God,
To reconnect with you
And reconnect with each other,
Seeking to hear you as Word
After being made right with you through confession and prayer.
As we enter in truthful confession.
We face the past of our nation with pride and shame
We acknowledge the good,
Those who sought to do what is right,
Often against policy and practice of government and institution.
And that and those who have built capacity and made things better,
Striving for a better Australia for all people.
We acknowledge the bad,
Those who dehumanised others,
Or participated in suffering, oppression and the creation of trauma,
Whether it be through blind service to the times,
The failings of misguided good intentions
A suspension of compassion in prejudice and hard hearted-ness,
Or the intentional practise of cruelty in the relishing of hatred and discrimination.
In this time,
We remember our First Peoples.
We bring to mind the inequity that they struggle against.
We attend to the trauma and suffering that still haunts so many.
We listen for the pain of the past which diminishes the present.
We seek to see the prejudice and discrimination that still lurks in pockets,
As a dark shadow haunting this nation from the success of past policy and enculturated attitudes.
These things that take away from the beauty of culture,
And taint the celebration of a great people,
And lessen us as a nation.
May we work for reconciliation
May we join together for the common good
May we unite with you in your work of love
May we walk together as your Church
And follow you as Christ,
That all may come to know grace and peace.
United, we pray.
Amen.

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2019 NAIDOC Week Praying - Voice. Treaty. Truth

(National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee)

God of this land and all land,
God of all peoples,
We name the truth,
The First Peoples of Australia,
Hold ancient sovereignty unrecognised in colonisation,
Have been the victims of invasion,
Have been dehumanised, persecuted and discriminated against,
They have had government policy and culture turned against them
Land taken
Children stolen
Language decimated
Culture weakened
I lend my voice in prayer,
Not wanting to speak for my brothers or sisters,
Who are well able to speak for themselves,
And recognising that I only hold a vicarious understanding of the hurt and suffering they carry,
But wanting to uphold them in their struggles.
Despite steps in reconciliation,
They still experience much hurt today.
May we listen better to their voice,
Creating space for it to be heard.
May we hear the call for treaty,
So that their nations can be recognised as should have been the case so long ago.
May we hold the truth,
Allowing the good and bad,
Letting it confront and inspire us towards a better present and future.
As Christ, be with us and hold your people,
As Spirit, lead us into a better way we pray.
Amen.