

Reflection for Pax Christi Australia NSW Meeting 7th July 2014

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Sunday 6th July 2014

Dadirri by Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann

“Dadirri is inner, deep listening and quiet, still awareness. Dadirri recognises the deep spring that is inside us. We call on it and it calls to us. This is the gift that Australia is thirsting for. It is something like what you call ‘contemplation’.

When I experience dadirri, I am made whole again. I can sit on the riverbank or walk through the trees; even if someone close to me has passed away, I can find my peace in this silent awareness. There is no need of words. A big part of dadirri is listening.”

“In our Aboriginal way, we learnt to listen from our earliest days. We could not live good and useful lives unless we listened. This was the normal way for us to learn - not by asking questions. We learnt by watching and listening, waiting and then acting.”

“My people are not threatened by silence. They are completely at home in it. They have lived for thousands of years with Nature’s quietness. My people today, recognise and experience in this quietness, the great Life-Giving Spirit, the Father of us all.”

Landmarks: A Spiritual Search in a Southern Land by Fr. Eugene Stockton

It is no accident that the three great monotheistic religions - Islam, Judaism and Christianity - all come out of the desert. As we seek our own spiritual way in Australia, a mostly desert continent, we need to take stock of the spiritual heritage we carried with us from whatever homeland across the sea. Our oldest traditions resonate with the austere landscape of our new home. Our younger traditions grew up amid the lush green and temperate climate of Europe. Our religious culture had moved successively from the desert to the Temple, and again into the market place (the Roman Basilica) and thence into the Cathedral. Christendom expressed itself exuberantly in architecture, art, music and culture set snug within four walls of the church. Proudly owning our heritage, we yet gently let it go, as we now find Our way in a broad dry land more akin to that which cradled our religion. God is beckoning us back to the stark simplicity of our beginnings, as we face the truth of Australia.

Source: Additional Material for Reflection from National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council Liturgy Resources p210