



SEASON OF THE SPIRIT

STUDENT EDITION

A faith and justice prayer resource for use with
secondary aged students in Catholic schools and parishes
– from Pentecost to the Feast of St Aloysius.

**Australian
CATHOLICS**



daily prayer



PARISH LIFE



CATHOLIC TEACHER

Brought to you by Jesuit Communications Australia. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter: #seasonofthespirit

INTRODUCTION

In the month following Pentecost the Catholic Church recalls the coming of the Holy Spirit among Christ's apostles, while Australia considers its relationships with the environment, refugees and reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. This year we have decided to call this the 'Season of the Spirit'.

During this season we are invited to consider how the coming of the Holy Spirit encourages us and invites us to consider our relationships with God, each other and creation. It is a time for building community through a spirit of reconciliation.

This resource offers weekly prayers for use with secondary aged students in schools and parishes. There is also an accompanying resource for use with school staff and adults in Catholic ministries, which is available at www.pray.com.au/seasonofthespirit.

The six-week program covers the following days:

WEEK 1: Pentecost (20 May)

WEEK 2: Reconciliation week (27 May – 3 June)

WEEK 3: World Environment Day (3 June)

WEEK 4: Care for the homeless (10 June)

WEEK 5: Refugee Week (17 – 23 June)

WEEK 6: Feast of St Aloysius in the Jubilee Year
(Feast Day 21 June – prayers for week beginning 25 June).



SUGGESTED PROCESS

PRAYER > CONVERSATION > ACTION

We encourage you to follow a pattern of prayer, conversation and action in using this resource.

Teachers could use the reflections in homeroom on the first day of the week, or as part of a broader school assembly. Each of the prayers offers a conversation point for students to reflect on with someone near them. These conversation points ask participants to reflect on the question: 'What small thing can I do this week?'

The reflections will also be sent out via email each week.

You can sign up for the email at pray.com.au.

WEEK ONE:

PENTECOST (20 MAY)

WHAT ARE WE DOING WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT TO BRING RECONCILIATION TO OUR COMMUNITY?

Student prayer

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Presence of God

We become aware of the presence of God among us.

Reading: Acts 2:1-11 (NRSV)

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? ... in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.'



mikolaj / Shutterstock.com

OPTIONAL PENTECOST VIDEO:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f5w3uphui48>

REFLECTION

Most people know that at Pentecost the Holy Spirit came down on the twelve chosen disciples and they began to preach. It is the beginning of the church when the disciples spoke boldly about Jesus' gathered followers whose prayer and life was focused on gratitude for what God had done through Jesus' death and rising. But there is more to the feast than that. Pentecost is in fact the season of the Spirit in which we live, a season in which our lives are changed.

In the story Luke tells the coming of the Spirit introduces a season of reconciliation. The breach between people was symbolised in the story of the Tower of Babel and the division of people by language. That division is healed at Pentecost when people who had travelled from many different parts to celebrate the feast each hear the disciples' words in their own language. It follows that Jesus' followers are to overcome divisions by forming a church united by the Spirit of Christ in discovering God's love.

For us the feast of Pentecost is a time to celebrate the way in which we have been gathered into a community by the Spirit. It is also a time to let go of our fear and shame in speaking of Christ and living together. It is a time to commit ourselves by prayer, conversation and small commitments to reconciling the huge differences and hostilities in our world. It is a season long enough to last a lifetime.

By Andrew Hamilton SJ

CLOSING PRAYER

Glory Be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen.

CONVERSATION PROMPT QUESTION

What small thing can I do to reconcile with others this week?

WEEK TWO:

RECONCILIATION WEEK

(27 MAY – 3 JUNE)

WHAT STEPS WILL WE TAKE AS A COMMUNITY TO RECONCILE WITH ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AUSTRALIANS?

Student prayer

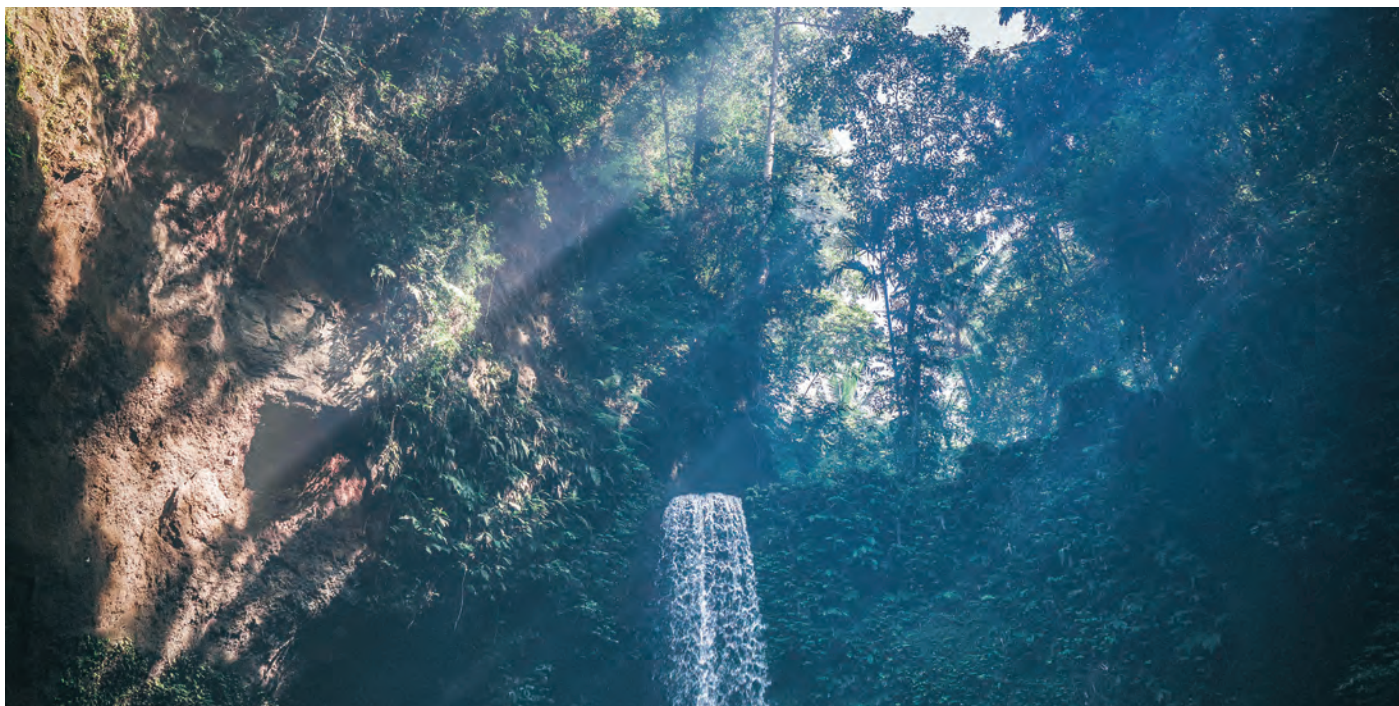
In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Presence of God

We become aware of the presence of God among us.

Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:17-20 (NRSV)

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.



Benjamin Lossius

VIDEO:

Dadirri video from Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pkY1dGk-LyE&t=2s>

REFLECTION

Dadirri is about tapping into that deep spring that is within us. It is inner, deep listening and quiet, still awareness ... There are deep springs within each of us. Within this deep spring, which is the very Spirit of God, is a sound. The sound of Deep calling to Deep. The sound is the word of God – Jesus.’ Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr

Those of us without Indigenous roots often find it hard to enter imaginatively the world of Indigenous Australians, with its feel for the interconnectedness of our human world and our natural environment. This is expressed in a deep attention to landmarks, flora and fauna, and is encapsulated in the stories that provide a map for people to live in peace with one another and with the world, their home.

Reflecting on the Indigenous understanding of the world also illuminates weaknesses in the dominant strands of our Australian culture. Our world, like that of other nations founded from Europe, focuses on competitive individuals, often devaluing the importance of their connection with other people and with the environment of which they are part.

Reconciliation week reminds us that we are not simply individuals, but that we belong to one another. To make a good Australian future we must work cooperatively.

By Andrew Hamilton SJ

CLOSING PRAYER

Glory Be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen.

CONVERSATION PROMPT QUESTIONS

What does Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr say ‘Dadirri’ reveals about God?

What small thing can I do to further the work of reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians this week?

WEEK THREE: WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY (5 JUNE)

HOW WILL WE CARE FOR THE EARTH AS A COMMUNITY?

Student prayer

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Presence of God

We become aware of the presence of God among us.

Reading: Psalm 24: 1 – 2

The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains. The world, and those who dwell in it. For He has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.

Video

Pope Video on Care for Creation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akK7diU4Kgc>

Reflection

On World Environment Day it is worth returning to *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis' passionate exhortation to care for the environment. The most significant insight of the document is that the environment is not something outside ourselves that we have and with which we deal. We are part of the environment. When we speak of the environment we are speaking of ourselves. When we respect or exploit the environment, we are respecting or exploiting ourselves. When we safeguard or put at risk the future of the world, it is our own future and that of our children that we risk or protect.

World Environment Day reminds us that we cannot rescue the world from the consequences of global warming simply by better technology and clever solutions. Care for the environment demands a vision of one another and of the world as inextricably linked so that we take personally the exploitation of the environment and of vulnerable people. This vision calls for a conversion from competition to cooperation, from exploitation to respect, from disregard to attentiveness, and from greed to thankfulness.



Sander Sloots_via Flickr

A PRAYER FOR OUR EARTH FROM POPE FRANCIS' *LAUDATO SI'*

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.
Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace. Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER

Glory Be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen.

CONVERSATION PROMPT QUESTION

What small thing can I do to care for the earth this week?

WEEK FOUR:

CARE FOR THE HOMELESS

HOW WILL WE CARE FOR THE HOMELESS AS A COMMUNITY?

Student prayer

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Presence of God

We become aware of the presence of God among us.

Gospel: Mark 3: 31-35 (NRSV)

Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, 'Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you.' And he replied, 'Who are my mother and my brothers?' And looking at those who sat around him, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.'



Jose María Cuellar_via Flickr

POPE VIDEO:

Welcome the needy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DBU4kj51rxQ>

REFLECTION

When we know people who are homeless, we know that the usual excuses for turning aside are not true. People do not want to be homeless. Certainly, they may have been so damaged by being driven out of home and being homeless that they have lost hope of finding a decent place to live. But they did not come to this by choice. It is forced on them by being rejected.

The roots of homelessness so often lie in the lack of a nurturing home in childhood. So if we are to address its roots we must help parents with young children to learn how to raise their children lovingly. We must provide resources to families under strain, so children can be educated and can make connection with society.

By Andrew Hamilton SJ

CLOSING PRAYER

Glory Be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen.

CONVERSATION PROMPT QUESTION

What small thing can I do this week to support people suffering homelessness?

WEEK FIVE: REFUGEE WEEK

(17 JUNE – 23 JUNE)

HOW WILL WE CARE FOR REFUGEES AS A COMMUNITY?

Student prayer

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Presence of God

We become aware of the presence of God among us.

Naming my desire

To hear the cry of refugees.

Reading: Mark 4:26-32 (NRSV)

[Jesus] also said, 'The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.'

He also said, 'With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.'

With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.



VIDEO:

#Do1Thing: Helping refugees brings out their potential
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMI7klmD9yE>

REFLECTION

Refugee Week is a time to gather heart and to look at the small things that bless the lives even of desperate people: the visits to detention centres, the supportive letters in the daily papers, the march for refugees that people in detention glimpse on the television news, the letters to politicians, the conversation that turns another person from problems to persons, the encouragement we give to people who have opened their hearts to asylum seekers for the long haul.

These small things do not free people from detention, close Manus Island and Nauru as overseas prisons, nor change the minds of the majority of Australians who believe that we should punish asylum seekers in order to stop the boats. But in doing these things we dig the small channels that, when the season changes and the rain comes, will irrigate the parched fields.

By Andrew Hamilton SJ

CLOSING PRAYER

Glory Be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen.

CONVERSATION PROMPT QUESTION

What small thing can I do this week for refugees?

WEEK SIX: FEAST OF ALOYSIUS (21 JUNE)

HOW DO WE SERVE THOSE MOST IN NEED AS A COMMUNITY?

Student prayer

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Presence of God

We become aware of the presence of God among us.

Reading: Matthew 22:34-40

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them a scholar of the law, tested him by asking, 'Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?'

Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment.

'The second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.'



Beth Doherty

VIDEO:

Saints in :60 | James Martin on Aloysius Gonzaga
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E_nEvgilg0A

REFLECTION

In this Year of Youth, we celebrate a Jubilee Year of St Aloysius Gonzaga. Born in 1568, he died at the age of 23. Ironically he spent his young life defying expectations but as a saint helped shape the expectations of other young people.

Luigi Gonzaga was born the eldest son of a rich, noble family, and was naturally expected to increase the wealth, prestige and connections of his family through military prowess and connections at court. The trouble was that he did not want any of it. He dreamed of becoming a priest and giving his life to God. Among the Gonzaga males these dreams were incomprehensible and intolerable. His father was furious when confronted with them.

Aloysius dug his heels in and set about living a holy life. With only stories of saints to guide him, he prayed for long hours, fasted rigorously, and set himself to join the new and controversial Jesuits. His father eventually gave in; Aloysius renounced his inheritance and became a Jesuit.

He had to learn that religious life was a community, not simply an individual game. He moderated his penances, was a brilliant student, but his health was weak. He died nursing during a plague epidemic. He was forbidden to nurse plague victims, but ironically one of the safe patients he nursed had been wrongly diagnosed, and Aloysius was infected.

Aloysius spent his life sailing into a headwind. He raised eyebrows by giving his life to work with sick people. We give thanks for his life today.

By Andrew Hamilton SJ

CLOSING PRAYER

Glory Be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
 As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
 World without end. Amen.

CONVERSATION PROMPT QUESTION

What small thing can I do this week to serve those most in need in our community?

SEASON OF THE SPIRIT

Resource written by James O'Brien and Michael McVeigh. Design Maggie Power
Gospel readings taken from NRSV Bible.

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