

# Jubilee Central Australian Pilgrimage

7-11 September 2000

Martin Wilson msc

**I**N A *Compass* issue last year (vol.33, no.4, pp.23–27) Peter Wood msc announced that plans had been under discussion for a Jubilee Year event during 2000 that would involve a pilgrimage in Central Australia. The idea of a Jubilee Year pilgrimage in the NT to a significant site had first been aired at a clergy conference in Darwin. Places considered had included Port Essington, the site of the first attempt at mission to the people of the Top End in 1846, and Kurdarntiga near Port Keats where Mulinthin had a pre-evangelisation dream-vision.<sup>1</sup> Consultation over several months resulted in the choice of the Central Australian pilgrimage. The Aboriginal people involved with the Catholic mission/church agreed after protracted consultation among themselves that it would be meaningful to remember their experiences in association with the present-day church members.

## Background

The area of Alice Springs and the country to the east is occupied traditionally by Eastern Arrernte people—referred to in earlier days as Arunta or Aranda. They were displaced when white settlement moved in with the building of the Overland Telegraph in 1872, the Adelaide–Alice Springs railway in the 1920s and cattle stations in the area round about. Fr Long msc was appointed to Alice Springs as parish priest to the small community in 1929. He was succeeded in 1935 by Fr Paddy Maloney msc fresh from founding a mission at Menindee in western NSW. At Alice Springs Fr Maloney started the Little Flower Mission,

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Eugene Stockton's account in *Nelen Yubu* No.22 pp.3–11 (1985).

first in the church grounds and then on the edge of town at Charles Creek. He was assisted by a laymissionary, Frank McGarry, a number of OLSH Sisters and by Br Eddie Bennett msc—now retired at Alice Springs and present at the Jubilee pilgrimage—until Br Bennett went north to Melville Island in 1941.

With the declaration of war with Japan some 5,000 military personnel moved into Alice. When meningitis occurred in the Charles Creek camp, the army decided to clear Alice Springs of all Aborigines. With 24 hours notice, they were all loaded onto army trucks and driven to Arltunga, a disused goldmining area 110 km north-east of Alice. Apparently plans to shift them out to Arltunga had already been afoot: experimental wells had been dug in search of good water but with only moderate success. In the course of the next ten years the camp and mission had to be moved several times in pursuit of better living conditions.

Nowadays Arltunga has become a tourist attraction. The road is sealed for some 50 km, the rest is rough but made and navigable by standard-drive cars. Tourists drive out in relative comfort to experience briefly that rough, dry, rocky country typical of the Centre. An enterprising chap has put up a bush pub, the Arltunga Hotel, where hot food and cold drink can be bought. He has set up a camping ground near the pub where one can pitch tents in the shade of small trees, be supplied with good burning wood for glorious open fires during the cold nights of the middle of the year, and enjoy hot showers and toilet facilities. During the pilgrimage NYMU set up camp there, as did a few groups of Sisters and some Aboriginal families—who travel nowadays in much more comfortable style in their Pajeros and Land Cruisers than they did as little children on the back of army trucks.

In 1952 Bishop O'Loughlin gained the lease of the Philipson Block, some 480 square miles in area situated a little over 80 km south east of Alice Springs. It is capable of carrying some cattle, but it's not far from the Simpson Desert... At any rate it offered better living conditions than Arltunga, so the mission and the Aboriginal settlement moved in 1953 to the Philipson Block, renamed Santa Teresa—nowadays Ltyentye Appurte. Initially the diocese had not meant Santa Teresa to be a full-scale settlement, only an educational

and health-care centre, and a place of respite for the old and retired. However, the big drought of the 1950s and the changes in Aboriginal employment and wages conditions in the 1960s resulted in Santa Teresa's development into a major residential area.

### **The Pilgrimage**

The aim of the Jubilee Pilgrimage was to retrace the people's journey from Charles Creek, to Arltunga and on to Santa Teresa.

At various stages in the pilgrimage some 150 to 200 people were in attendance, a mixture of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. Most belonged to the Northern Territory, though quite a few, like ourselves of NYMU, came from interstate. The ecclesiastical contingent was headed by Bishop Ted Collins msc of Darwin. There were about a dozen priests involved and a large number of Sisters.

### **Town House**

In the evening of Thursday 7 September the pilgrims gathered at the town accommodation centre in Alice Springs erected for the Santa Teresa people in Fr John Clancy's time. Peter Wood had intended to open the pilgrimage with a Mass that evening, in proper clerical style. However, he had very appropriately handed over the organisation of the pilgrimage to an Aboriginal committee, which promptly scrapped the idea of a Mass, which would have been very awkward with all the coming and going, old friends meeting up, strangers introducing themselves and a barbecue put on by Rotary. Instead, the opening Mass was the one at Charles Creek next morning. The pilgrimage was launched on the Thursday evening by a smoking ceremony and the presentation of a series of screens painted by Santa Teresa women and hung up on the long wall of the courtyard—all events of the pilgrimage took place in the open air.

A screen that I found extremely significant we have reproduced on the left hand page of the colour centrepiece. Underneath the reproduction I have epitomised Agnes Palmer's presentation. It is a strong artistic statement of the Arrernte people's belief that their traditional culture guided them under God towards the acceptance of the gospel of Christ when it came—even though the 'christian' guise it wore when it arrived did not make the acceptance easy. Intriguing is the figure of the 'Messenger' in the centre of the screen. Agnes Palmer

told me that it is only recently that people have begun to talk about this figure who was inciting the people, including her own family, to go in to Alice in the early days to hear this good news. Was there actually a desert prophet, or is he more of a symbolic figure? Significant in either mode.

### **Charles Creek**

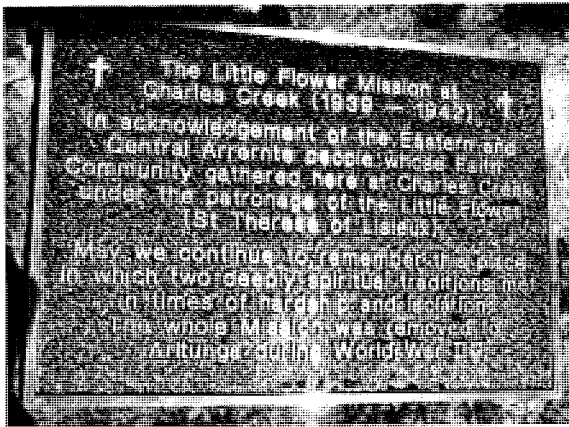
Charles Creek settlement is within easy walking distance from the Alice Springs catholic church, on the other side of Anzac Hill. Mass was celebrated there on Friday morning under a large awning. The celebrant was Fr Pat Mullins sj, who is chaplain to the Aboriginal people in the Alice Springs area. The most memorable part of the Mass for me occurred at the very beginning. Pat was done up in the



first of the three specially painted chasubles and was talking in front of one of the screens which had been brought down from the previous evening's ceremony at the Town House when a very disturbed woman came up from one of the nearby houses, screaming and ranting, whether in English or Arrernte I couldn't make out, protesting clearly at what was going on. She made a grab for the microphone, threatened to kick in an electric guitar. She made an impassioned speech to us the congregation sitting dumbly in front of her. She

refused to let any of the female authority figures touch her. Pat stood there calmly, and when she turned on him, he let her have her say, with a quiet word or two from him. All the wild spirit went out of her. She stepped up to him, put her head on his shoulder, stood there for a while, then meekly accepted a chair to the side of the altar and facing us the by now very relieved congregation, where she sat for the rest of the Mass. When the reader of the first lesson was a bit slow in stepping up to the lectern, she offered to do the reading for us. Somehow the whole incident was more symbolic than anything that could have been painted or arranged.

After the Mass a plaque was blessed to commemorate the place Charles Creek holds in the life of the community. The first page of the



central colour piece carries a (B & W) shot of the group of six women who were taken away from Arltunga as small girls in 1947 and sent to the new Mixed Race settlement on Melville Island. One of them, Barbara-Rita, was

only two years old at the time. Their return to the people and place they were abducted from turned out to constitute one of the major themes of the pilgrimage.

### **Arltunga**

During Friday afternoon the pilgrimage crowd got into their vehicles and travelled out to Arltunga, 110 kilometres east of Alice Springs. The first part of the journey was on sealed road. Close to Arltunga we all paused at Paddy's Rock Hole, one of the sites occupied by the mission after being shipped out by the army in 1942. We were instructed in the story of the site and then moved on to the

## *Nelen Yubu*

dry creek bed at Arltunga where the bulk of the people camped from Friday afternoon till Sunday. As I mentioned earlier, some of us



camped in the camping ground beside the Arltunga Hotel. Saturday evening the bishop led us in the celebration of Mass under the cover of old gum trees on the sands of the dry creek bed. At the end of Mass a great circle formed with linked hands. Around the camp fires into the night a lot of story-telling went on, with laughter and some tears.



## **Cemetery**

On Sunday morning we went to the old cemetery when some 40 people had been buried during the ten years of the mission's existence at Arltunga. Recently, with the help of Rotary in Alice Springs, the cemetery has been fenced in and white wooden crosses erected over

the graves. The Mass we celebrated there is well described by Secretary Keren in her 'Secretary's Desk'.

At the end of Mass another commemorative plaque was blessed by the main celebrant (John Kelliher msc). Its wording is:

'May they rest in Peace'

In loving memory of the Eastern and  
Central Arrernte people who passed  
Away at Arltunga, and in the surrounding  
area, between the years 1942 and 1953.

Kele Ngkartekenhe iltyele aneme.  
(Now at rest in God's care.)

## **Santa Teresa**

The pilgrimage moved to Santa Teresa during Sunday afternoon. The next morning the closing Mass was celebrated in Santa Teresa chapel. After Mass a barbecue lunch was provided, again I believe by Rotary, at the sporting oval.

## **The Spring**

On Monday afternoon many of us rounded off the pilgrimage by a visit to the Santa Teresa Miraculous Spring. It is within easy walking distance of the mission, halfway up a small hill on its western side.



## *Nelen Yubu*

The story of the spring was recounted to Keren thus:

'In 1992 a 19-year-old boy was desperately ill in hospital, not expected to live. Suddenly one day he told his mother that Our Lady had given him a message. He said she told him to send someone out to Santa Teresa to look for a spring on the hillside, and explained exactly where it was—only a short walk from the mission. They were to collect some of the water from this spring and bring to him in hospital, and if he drank the water he would recover.

The mother arranged for this to be done and water from the spring, which had never been seen before, was brought to the dying boy. He drank it and gradually began to improve. Finally, his health was completely restored and he left the hospital cured.

Later, a specimen of the water was sent to a laboratory for testing. The result was that the water was unfit for human consumption.

Many people have been drinking the water from this spring, and are still doing so, without any ill effects.'

The ceremonies at the spring were very laid-back in style. Some boys filled up bottles of water for those who wanted them—mine was



an altar wine bottle. I have included a photo of this bottle-filling procedure on the fourth page of the centrepiece. When we were



mainly gathered, Leonie Palmer led us in the recitation of five decades of the rosary. Often, I'm told, they recite the full fifteen of them. After the rosary Leonie spoke to us about the spring. A group of children clothed in black and white sang hymns with actions, waving blue ribbons.

It was a fitting finale to a memorable experience.

**Cost of *Nelen Yubu***

In the previous issue we announced that  
*Nelen Yubu* would incur GST;  
accordingly, the price of an annual subscription  
(3 issues)  
would be raised from  
\$15 to \$16.50.

On further advice, we have discovered that  
our previous opinion was mistaken.  
*Nelen Yubu* is produced by a type of labour  
that is specialised and costly to pay for,  
but which in this case,  
is given gratuitously and gladly so.

So,  
contrary to our previous advice,  
the cost of an annual subscription  
remains  
at  
**\$15.**

## BOOK REVIEW

*My Names: sketches and glimpses in hindsight.* Soft cover. Nelen Yubu Missiological Unit, Kensington, 2000. 179 pp. ISBN 0 9587869 1 7. Retail at \$16.50 including GST, plus \$1.20 postage, and is obtainable from the office of Nelen Yubu, 1 Roma Avenue, Kensington, 2033. Telephone: (02) 9315 2231; Fax: (02) 9697 9350.

Frank Andersen msc writes:

'We've long recognised in Peter Malone his gift for serious writing—whether as editor of *Compass*, in his own theological articles over the years, in his astute and thoughtful reviewing of movies. A book like *My Names* in a delightful sense shows Peter's capacity to entertain with word and image. This is a wise book. A sort of biography constructed from the characters who've peopled his rich life (many of them, of course, fellow MSCs). His recall of incident and conversation is razor-sharp; his depiction of the times and circumstances through which so many of us have lived is fascinating—be they his boarding years at Chevalier, or Novitiate at Douglas Park, or the heady years of University and Seminary life in Canberra. Peter writes about "the characters" met along the way (MSCs well known and loved), portraying them with a sympathy, a humour and a graciousness that comes straight from his MSC tradition.

The book is partly thus a social record of an MSC era in which many of us have shared. He depicts so many elements of our former way of life that their accuracy frequently startled me in the recall! This engaging series of personal vignettes manages to evoke one's own memories as well as convey (in an entertaining and enriching way) those of Peter. It is simply a very good read.'

Peter is presently president of the OCIC (International Catholic Organisation for Cinema) based in London.

# THE BURNING BUSH

Dan O'Donovan<sup>1</sup>

## PART I

**W**E ARE BACK AGAIN, with Moses and Mount Sinai, in the cross-legged position, listening with our heart. (See *Nelen Yubu*, nos. 68 & 69).

One day, the Bible tells us:

Moses was looking after the sheep of Jethro, his father-in-law...He led them to the west side of the desert and came to Horeb (Sinai), the mountain of God. And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the middle of a bush. He looked and was surprised that, though the bush was burning, it was not consumed.

He said, 'I will turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.'

When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' He answered, 'Here I am.' Then God said, 'Do not come near. Take off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' And he said, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God...'

God sang out to Moses because he had an important job for him to do. That was why he allowed him to see the fire with his bodily eyes.

But as saint Isaac the Syrian noted many centuries later, *everything* has this fire inside it, the Real Presence. He called it 'the flame of things.' Only, we need God's special grace to see it.

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<sup>1</sup> Fr Dan O'Donovan, a frequent contributor, lives in a hermitage at The Rice Bore near Beagle Bay WA.

Another holy one who had a deep experience of this was saint Francis of Assisi.

At the first National Conference on Aboriginal Spirituality and Perceptions of Christianity, which was held at Victor Harbor, South Australia (2-6 August 1990), the late Mr Kevin Gilbert gave a personal address with the title *God at the Campfire and that Christ Fella*. At the end of his lively speech he expressed the hope that:

From this conference we'll be able to develop a strategy where we can start a *real* church in this land, not a church of real estate. Not a church which says, 'I'm a Christian, you fellas keep out there!' Right? Not a Catholic Church, not an Anglican Church (which had some sort of argument with the Catholics) or the Salvation Army (which had an argument with that mob), but a real church that will encompass us all... (*Aboriginal Spirituality: Present, Future*, edited by Anne Pattel-Gray, Harper Collins, 1996, p.64).

Now, with Francis of Assisi, we get back to before those arguments began. All those churches which came out of the Reformation can lay claim to Francis. All, if they wish to, *own* him. In this way he stands for a much more united Christianity than we see around us today. Even more is this the case of the spiritual riches coming to us from Syria. While Francis of Assisi lived in the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Syrian treasury is found mostly in Christian writings of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> and as far back as the 4<sup>th</sup>.

With the recognition in faith of an all-transcendent God who is Love communicating himself to us in creation, and even more in Incarnation, Aboriginal holism undergoes a radical change. Its theology (both theory and practice) now updates itself in the further Truth revealed.

Around the newborn Saviour were cows, donkeys and the sheep the shepherds brought. None of these animals was afraid, even though the cave was small and there wasn't much space to move around. They seemed to sense that something new was happening for them too. That a new relationship, a kinship, gentler than before, was being worked out before their eyes.

'What is a merciful heart?' asks saint Isaac the Syrian. 'It is the heart that burns for the whole of creation: for humans, birds, animals, for the demons and all that exists. At the thought or sight of them, its

eyes fill with tears from the force of the mercy which presses on the heart with a mighty compassion. The heart then can no longer bear to see or hear of harm or any suffering befalling any part of creation. That is why it implores God with tears even for reptiles, for the animals who cannot reason, for enemies of the truth, for its own persecutors, begging him to protect and strengthen them...'

From the days when survival depended on hunting, Aboriginal life has now moved into a time when this labour is no longer needed. Its energies are called for, indeed, in many other directions. But old habits never fail to leave deep-rooted urgings and attitudes, not easily laid aside. In what concerns spirituality, this feeling of pity for all of creation will be a useful area of self-purification for all Aborigines hungering now for deeper prayer and the experience of communion with God and neighbour and of healthy planetary life.

A few years ago I was walking in the bush not far south of Wyndham, with four uninitiated boys of about 10 to 12 years of age. Suddenly one of them whispered excitedly, *mangarri!* (a word which means in a general way, Food, in Walmajarri language. The boy was from Fitzroy Crossing where Malmajarri is the most widely spoken of the local languages.) He had spotted a *mangkula* (Dragon-lizard) moving in the grass. His instinctive reaction: not *mangkula*, but *mangarri*. Anything that moves in the grass is (possible) food. That must surely go back a long way.

One popular yearly event in the north of Australia is the colonial *rodeo*. The rodeo arose out of the cattle-raising industry of which Aboriginal people employed on the stations with their families were very much a part. It was one form of the 'fun' side of the industry. Champions though they are on horseback, Aboriginal competitors have become fewer and fewer in recent times for a number of reasons. In the interests of the healthy spirituality we have been talking about, this should be no cause of shame, but rather of satisfaction. The rodeo will nevertheless have sunk its coarsening memories into the Aboriginal mind and soul, which now have to shake free of them again by means of the practice of *dadirri*, with applied training of the sensibilities for action.

Aboriginal religious tradition was an oral tradition. The stories were passed on from one generation to the next, without anyone in

particular along the way shining as a star performer for later comers to look back to and admire. *The myth itself held the inspiration.* The passers-on, after being its creators and recreators, were its servants. That was the understanding. It was one of those humble ways which always draws God's special blessing. The great inventive geniuses, after serving it in love, returned to the obscurity of the Dreaming. In time, as persons, they would be forgotten.

In the major religions of the world on the other hand, it was not so. Wisdom was carefully consigned to writing, and sages left behind their fondly remembered name. The words they spoke are still on record, as also detailed accounts of their noble deeds.

With a large part of Aboriginal Australia now at the stage of evolving its own Gospel-inspired spirituality and Christian theology, it stands only to gain by taking time to look around for user-friendly source-models close to its own way of thinking. There is, of course, the Bible first and foremost. One thing Anglicans, Salvation Army, Catholics, all Evangelical communions are in complete agreement about: that between the covers of the Bible we have enough in the way of spiritual nourishment on which to feed our souls for a lifetime. We Catholics see theology as contained in the Bible and deriving from it. As God's own Word, and as place of encounter, the Bible stands then, always and incomparably, on its own.

But after that there are the grace-words of the centuries embodied in the lives of many saintly persons. These are like tributaries of the great Bible River, in the manner of the Vine and its branches. It would be ungrateful of us to neglect these words of grace. They serve in no small way to broaden, if not deepen, our understanding. They are of God and call to us. Our challenge is to 'read' them discerningly.

Two of these more likely tributaries I have already indicated, the Syrian and the Franciscan. Both their waters are broad, generous, inviting and abundant. Each in its way is a Christian expression of the holism, kinship and *wunan* components we have pointed to as forming the Aboriginal way. In further articles I will describe each of them more fully. The idea would be to help Aboriginal Christians to enjoy the Syrian and Franciscan 'songs'—situated culturally as they had to be in *their* time and place—then to go ahead and sing their own.

## PART II

Gracie Greene speaks Kukatja as her first language. She was born at Billiluna in 1949 and has four children, Anita, Jonathon, Vincent and Edith, all grown-up now, or nearly. During my time as resident priest at Fitzroy Crossing ('84-'88) I used to visit Wangkatjungka community where Gracie and her family were living at the time. One day Gracie most generously gave me the painting you can see on the colour centrepiece. At present it is hanging here in my little shed at the Rice Bore. Visitors are often deeply moved by it. I would like now to say something about this painting. But first of all I will give you what Gracie says about it herself. She wrote this down for me on a sheet of paper.

### Holy Spirit

Long time ago, when the world was dark,  
 long before the world was made,  
 God our Father lived in the heaven on his own. So one day God saw below the heavens, saw it was so dark and empty. Then God our Father said, I will make a man like myself. So God started his mighty work below the heavens. He made the world first, but still he saw that the world was dark outside. So God said: let there be light. He made the sun for the day-time, and moon and stars for the night and God our Father was pleased with that. Then after that God put man and woman on the world earth and from Adam and Eve came many people of all races. When Adam and Eve were put out from the great garden and have sinned, God told them, I will send my son one day when the time comes. Many years after that God picked Mary out of all the woman in her country to have her son through the holy spirit. So Jesus was born on this world like us he grew up and told them about his father in heaven. When the day came for him to die on the cross and by dying on the Cross for our sins so that we could go to God up in heaven, one day when we die. Jesus saves us from the devil. Long long ago when God made the world and put sun moon and the stars up in the sky, God put six stars and a small star like the Cross in the sky for all men to see. The Cross which we now call the *Southern*

*Cross*: That cross up in the sky is the dreaming for Jesus Christ our Lord: and from that came the dreaming for our Aboriginal people throughout Australia. (End of Gracie's presentation.)

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For me, Gracie's painting has become like a new enlightenment. What I see as the Burning Bush (which is the Cross of Jesus itself!), I bring inside me, so that it is buried in my heart. 'The Lord your God is a devouring fire,' Moses explained to the people (Deuteronomy 4,24). It consumes all the rubbish things, but leaves the pure gold. This is painful. But the Holy Spirit cools the flames, and consoles us in our suffering. (See Daniel, 3,25).

The campsite on the right, Gracie explains, is 'Jesus, Mary and Joseph.' The campsite on the left is 'the people.'

The snake is the biblical snake of the creation accounts in Genesis. With all Christian tradition, Gracie understands it as a symbol of 'the Devil.' It is not the Rainbow Serpent, which stands for something else—a point well made by the Rainbow Spirit Elders. (See their *Rainbow Spirit Theology*, Harper Collins 1997, chapter 2, section 3; also Appendix 3, pages 86–90).

This Kukatja Jesus in the painting, then, is ascending to the Father, and blesses us as he goes. He leaves behind his Holy Spirit, who is 'the Flame of things': divine Love as the healing, saving Presence of the World in all that is. In heaven he prepares a place for us, (John 14,2). He invites us, even now, to follow him.



# Nelen Yubu Productions

This year NYMU has been involved with several productions:

1. 14 May: Launching of Peter Malone's *My Names: sketches and glimpses in hindsight*. See Book Note on p.10 of this issue. The book was produced totally by NYMU, except for bookbinding. ISBN 0 9587869 1 7.
2. 14 May: Launching of John Bosman's edited collection of the poems and songs his mother wrote for her children. Also totally produced by NYMU, apart from the typing of the basic text (in Dutch) by John and the bookbinding. A limited edition, copies in the care of John Bosman. *Versjesboekje: Ter herinnering aan de kleuterjaren van mijn lieve kinderen*. Johanna van Thienen. 142 pp.
3. 31 August:: Launching of Anthony Caruana's *Monastery on the Hill: a history of the Sacred Heart Monastery, Kensington, 1897-1997*. Typesetting and camera-ready copy by NYMU, printing by Waverley Press, Randwick. 396 pp., soft cover \$40, hard cover \$50. Sales direct from A Caruana at Chevalier Resource Centre Library, 1 Roma Ave, Kensington. ISBN 0 9587869 2 3.
4. A book is in advanced stages of production that will consist of papers written in this periodical by Fr Dan O'Donovan on the theme of 'dadirri'. We hope it will appear early next year.
5. Another book is under discussion with its author.
6. Continuing production of this periodical, *Nelen Yubu*.

# Book Review

Anthony H Nichols<sup>1</sup>

*Vernacular Hermeneutics*, R S Sugiratharajah (editor), Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 1999, 148pp., p/b.

THIS IS the second volume in a series from Sheffield on the Bible and Post Colonialism. The contributors seek to break the stronghold of Western interpretation and to read the Bible from the vantage point of Amerindian, Caribbean, Latin American, African and Indian contexts.

In 'The Sign of Orpah', Laura Donaldson re-reads *Ruth* 'through native eyes'. She finds not the paradigmatic convert, loyal daughter-in-law and ancestress of King David, but an agent of culturecide and of Jewish assimilationist strategy just like Pocahontas in American Indian history. Orpah is the real heroine of *Ruth* because in a courageous act of self and communal affirmations she chooses her Moabite mother's house over that of the alien Israelite Father.

Dalila Nayap-Pot provides a different perspective on *Ruth* however, from a Costa Rican socio-political context. Ruth is seen as a bridge builder between the accursed Moabites and their Israelite enemies. Orpah's acceptance of Naomi's advice to return to her Moabite family and gods typifies the fatalism of many Central American women trapped in a patriarchal society. Ruth, however, makes herself sexually vulnerable, and available to her potential benefactor, out of personal need and solidarity with Naomi, and is

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<sup>1</sup> Bishop Tony Nichols served for twenty years with CMS in Borneo, Indonesia and among Australian Aborigines. He has a PhD in Biblical studies from the University of Sheffield. He is the present Anglican bishop of the diocese of North-West Australia, centred on Geraldton. The author has adapted this paper from one he wrote for *Themelios*, a British journal.



### The "Golden Girls"

The group of six women who were taken from Arltunga as young girls on a 'shopping expedition' to Alice Springs back in 1947. Their return back to the place and the people they were taken from constituted a major theme of the pilgrimage.

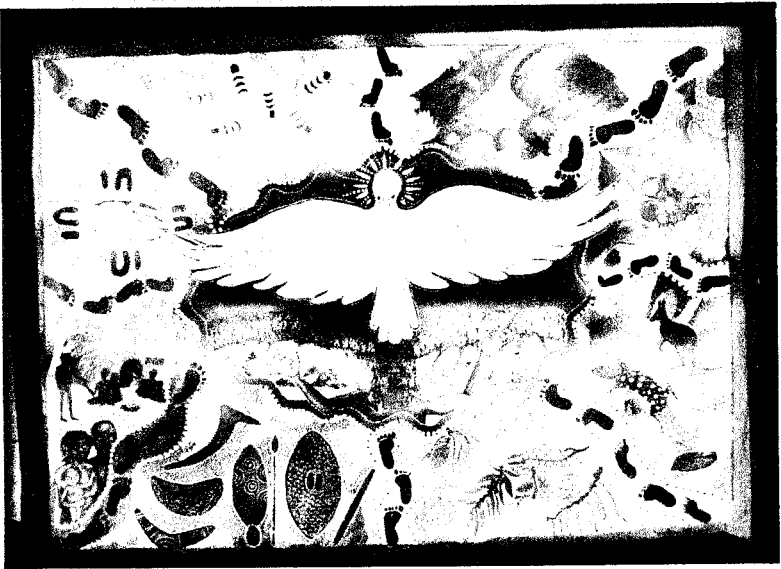
Taken at the plaque at Charles Creek

*In the front row, from the left:*

Wilma Cusack, Estelle Ross, [Fr John Leary msc], Barbara(Rita) Chisholm, Zita Wallace

*In the back row, from the left:*

Miriam Cubillo, [Bishop Ted Collins msc], Marita Ah Chee

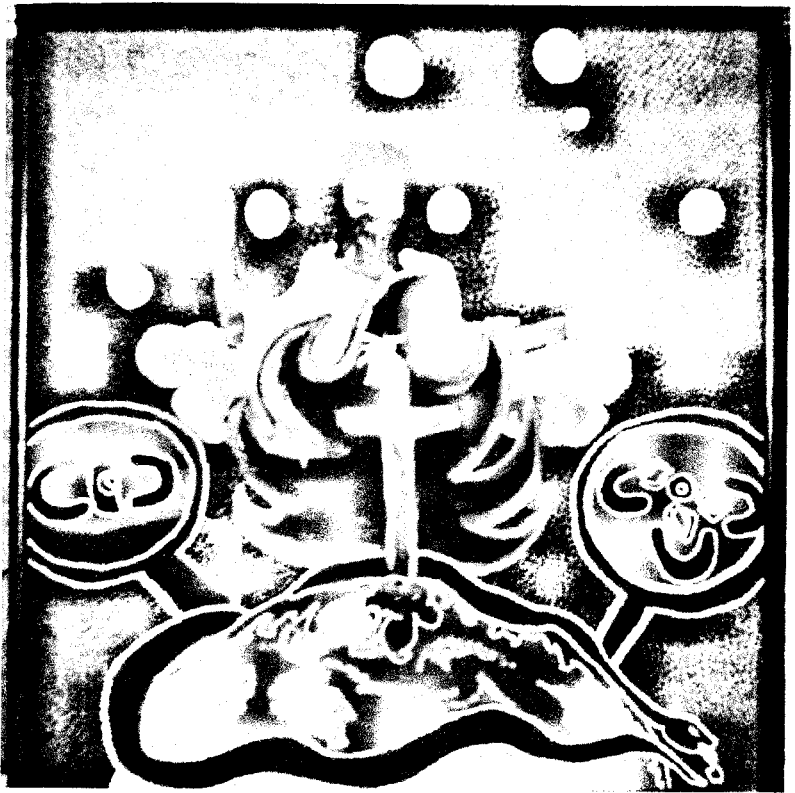


Pilgrimage 2000: Middle Screen

The painting is a statement that Aboriginal culture was directed under the influence of the spirit of God towards christianity. The centre ground is held by three items. The dominating one is the white dove standing for the Holy Spirit as in the customary iconography of christianity stemming from such gospel incidents as the baptism of Jesus. Secondly, there is the range behind Santa Teresa mission, indicating the church on earth. Thirdly, there is the realistic drawing of the old man in a stance of proclamation: he is the 'Messenger' who, John the Baptist style, went around preparing the people for the coming of the christian message. This prophetic figure has emerged only recently.

Aboriginal culture and society are indicated by the eight tracks of the eight subsections or 'skin' groups centring on the historical church as indicated by the Santa Teresa location.

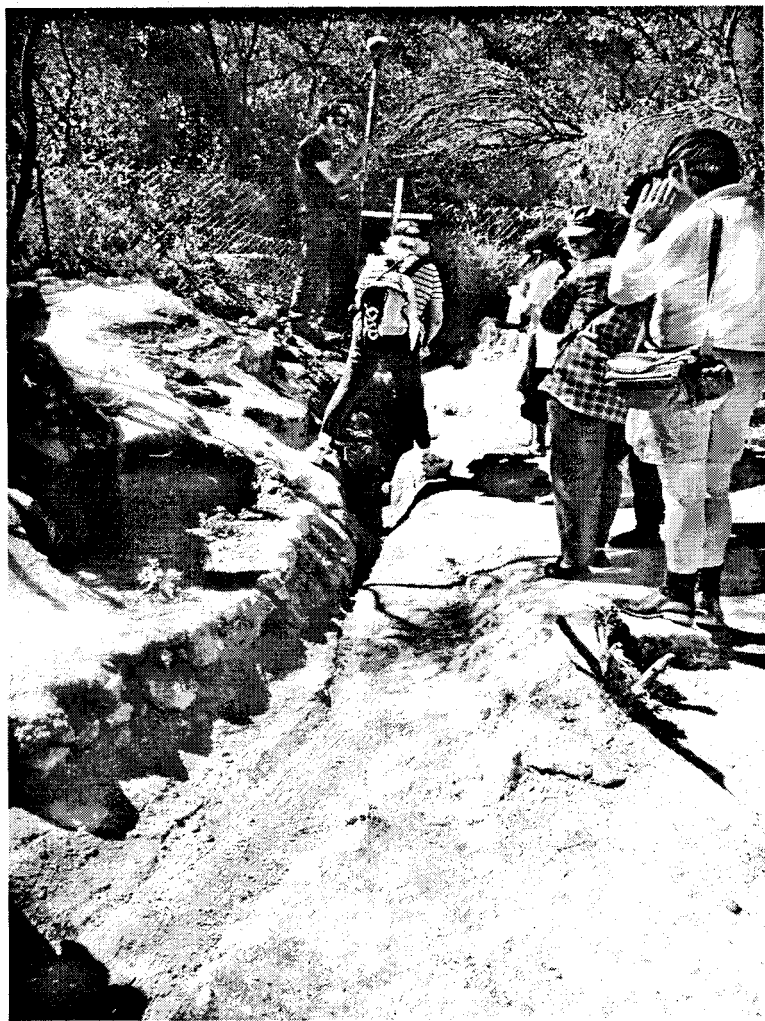
People, natural items of trees, plants and animals, and artefacts fill the intervening spaces.



Gracie Greene: *The Jesus Dreaming*

...Long long ago when God made the world and put sun, moon and the stars up in the sky, God put six stars and a small star like the Cross in the sky for all men to see. The Cross which we now call the *Southern Cross*. That cross up in the sky is the dreaming for Jesus Christ our Lord: and from that came the dreaming for our Aboriginal people throughout Australia.

— part of Gracie Greene's description of her painting as cited by Dan O'Donovan in his paper 'The Burning Bush'.



The Miraculous Spring  
Some boys are filling up bottles of water

blessed. The application? - How often do we expect God to do our 'dirty work' for us?!

Gerald West's 'Local is Lekker, But Ubuntu is Best' advocates that biblical scholars read the Bible together with indigenes, as a resource in the South African struggle for survival, liberation and life. His African perspective on the Joseph story (Gen. 37-50) is not without value but his 'socially engaged biblical scholar' does not escape the elitism and western-ness of the academic guild.

African converts in mission churches were forbidden to use incantations, charms and amulets as protection against their enemies or sorcery. But David Tuesday Adamo reveals how the memorization and incantation of certain Psalms has been used by independent indigenous Nigerian churches for protection, healing and success, together with indigenous rituals, herbs, prayer, fasting, and use of the names of God. The Western preoccupation with authorship, dates and *sitz im leben* is useless in the African context compared with a classification of the Psalms on the basis of content, function and efficacy in countering enemies, evil spirits, fear, barrenness, miscarriage and illness.

Among the remaining articles the editor contributes an honest 'Thinking about Vernacular Hermeneutics'. He acknowledges it is part of the intellectual movement of our time. It is post-modern in its renunciation of the Enlightenment meta-narratives, and in its elevation of the local as a site of creativity. It is post colonial in its battle against the invasion of foreign and universalist modes of interpretation. Sugiratharajah provides a stimulating survey of the concept of 'the vernacular' in both European and Indian history with instructive historical examples of types of vernacular readings that he classifies as 'conceptual correspondences', 'narrative enrichments' or 'performantial parallels'. It is a relief to see that Sugiratharajah does not romanticize the indigenous cultures which 'along with their enlivening aspects carry a baggage of feudal, patriarchal and even anti-egalitarian traditions'. Vernacularism can, he admits, easily degenerate into chauvinism, jingoism or narrow minded communalism. He also acknowledges that the interconnection between the vernacular and the global is now so deep that it is difficult to determine what is native and what is non-native. Nevertheless vernacularisation will be an

important hermeneutical category in so far as 'it means critical freedom to resist cultural imperialism and to challenge dominant ideologies'.

In summary, vernacular hermeneutics seeks to provide yet another stage in the indigenous revolt against western hegemony, that we have witnessed in the past forty years. It began with Kosuke Koyama's *Water Buffalo Theology* which mobilized indigenous cultural concerns for the theological enterprise and was followed by Korean *minjung*, Indian *dalit*, Japanese '*burakumin*', and the Latin American liberation theology which was so popular in Western theological circles. Then in theological education, the TEE movement sought to burst out of the alienating Western urban academy and to take seriously the cultural context of learning and ministry. Arguably the most subversive of all, however, has been the shift in Bible translation policy worldwide with the triumph of Eugene Nida's Dynamic Equivalence theory with its emphasis on 'naturalness' and the priority of the readers' horizon.

Vernacularism is a branch of the 'new hermeneutic' which increasingly dominates not only biblical studies but also the disciplines of history, literature and politics. The important insight that human beings bring their own assumptions and prejudices including racial biases to the reading of the Bible is salutary and humbling. But the suggestion that meaning resides not in the text but in the reader, must be resisted. The apostle Paul tells Timothy to strive to 'correctly handle the word of truth' (2 Tim 2:15). This implies that the progressive study of the text (particularly in the fellowship of the Church) will enable one to correct misconceptions. More importantly it reinforces the teaching of Jesus that in Scripture God has in fact given a word of **truth**.



# Workshop on Translation

attempts to translate the second consecratory prayer over the wine at Mass

Kevin McKelson sac<sup>1</sup>

The current (99) standard formula is:

*Take this, all of you, and drink from it:  
This is the cup of my blood,  
The blood of the new and everlasting covenant.  
It will be shed for you and for all  
So that sins may be forgiven.  
Do this in memory of me.*

Where does this text come from in Scripture?

1 Cor.11-25 has this:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me. (NRSV)

Literally the Greek version is: This chalice is the New Testament in my blood. Do this as often as you drink (it) in commemoration of me. (Fr Frank Mecham in private communication 1978)

Luke 22:20 has this:

This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. (NRSV with note). Literally the Greek version is: This chalice is the New Testament (or covenant) in my blood which will be shed for you (literally: is being shed.)

Note the Greek often uses the present when the future is meant, e.g. Zaccheus says: I give half my goods to feed the poor—the sense is—now that I have been converted, I will give etc.

These two parallel texts are part of the Pauline Lucan tradition of the Last Supper.

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<sup>1</sup> Kevin is chaplain to Notre Dame University, Broome Campus. He spent many years as pastor at La Grange, now Bidyadanga.

# Workshop on Translation

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*Take this, all of you, and drink from it:*

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In addition Mark 12:24 has this: This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. (NRSV)

The Greek has: This is my blood of the testament which will be shed for many.

Matthew 26:27-28 has this:

Drink from it all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. (NRSV)

The Greek has: Drink from it (all of you) for this is the blood of the covenant which will be shed for the remission of sins.

These two texts form the Markan tradition.

Bokenkotter on p.201 in his book *Essential Catholicism* states the two traditions including those given for the consecration of the bread which I have not dealt with 'are by agreement of most scholars, liturgical formulae current in the early Church.'

Subsequently he deals with the development of the Eucharist from the shape 'of the ordinary Jewish table ritual of grace before and after meals to the form of the Earliest Mass...the Evolving Format of the Eucharist...the Medieval Mass...the Reformation Protestant Liturgies...the Catholic Liturgical Movement..and Vatican 2.'

Other reference works covering basic exegesis would be when relevant the *N.J.B.C.* briefly but succinctly no. 78.51...*Introduction to the New Testament* by Raymond Brown commenting on the passages given above. *Dictionary of the Bible* by McKenzie on the Eucharist p.249-252 and among others chapter 9 in *How to Understand the Sacraments*, SCM Press.

Having said that, the purpose of this study is to outline how I tried at La Grange Mission to translate or at least give a basic version of how the second consecratory prayer could be translated into one or more of the Aboriginal languages spoken in the Broome diocese.

The first Mass which I attempted to translate was in Karajarri, the local language of La Grange now Bidyadanga. It was written before Vat. 2, because I was using an orthography which I changed after the Council to one which was more widely used in the north...

The true sound of *b* and *p* for instance was usually somewhere in the middle, unaspirated rather than aspirated but there again 'it ain't always necessarily so.'

This is the first English version made from Karajarri, the local language at La Grange:

Take and Drink it all of you.

*Marraaya .. Ngalaya nyurralu.*

This is my blood.

*Nangu ngajukura kunpulu.*

Tomorrow my blood will flow (on the cross) for you all.

*Manan kunpulu yantalkujarrangala (pakangka kirrpintangka) nyurraku maluku.*

People have done wrong to me (hurt my deepest self) (sinned)

*Ngarrungurrangulu ngarlu kurlu janpanyiya.*

Let them look at me.

*Mira kangkunyia.*

Let them feel sorry for me (let them repent on my account)

*Parraka jarrujija.*

When I am no longer with you, do this.

*Ngajungka nyirrarni nguru.. jalaya nangu*

In an explanatory note to this version I wrote:

I cannot translate as yet the words of the new and eternal covenant. The Aborigines have no word for agreement. If there is agreement used in a discussion they usually refer to it as coming to a *Word* which they accept with a *Waraja Ngarlu* i.e. with one belly (gut feeling, mind or heart). Note there is another word for the physical intestines but *Ngarlu* means the deepest self of a person.

As for the remainder of the consecratory prayer I interpreted it as follows.

It will be shed = my blood will flow (there is no passive in the language)

Sins = people have done wrong to me = they have hurt my feelings = they have hurt my deepest self = my will = my heart not my physical heart but my deepest self.

May be forgiven = sins will be forgiven by looking at Christ crucified (lifted up.) There is no word for forgiveness. In the act of feeling sorry the whole person is involved. If we feel sorry for someone using the

Aboriginal word for sorry we state we forgive that person. If we ask God to feel sorry for us, we ask his forgiveness. Do this in memory of me. For want of a better translation I have used the form the people use when they are personally absent (When I am behind - i.e. out of sight, not with you.)

Though Karajarri was the local language, another neighbouring language coexisted with it. It was Nyangumarta. It had two forms: northern and southern. The northern spoken to the immediate south of La Grange was distinguished by its use of vowel euphony. For example the phrase "later on in the big wet season" would be spoken as *yartiNGI ngapaNGA wirtuNGU*. *NGI*, *NGA* and *NGU* all mean "in", sounding as such in agreement with last sound of the word preceding them. If however that same sentence were said by a southern *Nyangumarta* speaker it would be spoken as *yartiNGKA ngapaNGKA wirtuNGKA*. *NGKA* in each instance means 'in', a factor occasioned by the dialect's proximity to desert languages which did not have vowel harmony and in which the word for "in" was generally *NGKA*.

Dr Geoffrey O'Grady arguably one of Australia's finest linguists told me that Nyangumarta was the lingua franca of the Pilbara at that time, just as Bazaar Malay was the lingua franca of the pearling lugger crews in Broome. There were many other languages spoken in the Pilbara but speakers only gradually emerged with the culture explosion at a later date. I learnt this language having been taught its structure by Dr O'Grady and my several Aboriginal informants, in particular Tommy Dodd who spoke an impeccable Northern Nyangumarta. However he, in line with the rule of vowel euphony, would call it *Nyangumurtu*.

Two translations of the consecratory prayer emerged subsequently, one given by Pincher Dalan a Catholic and at the same time a tribal man totally committed to his law. The second was by Dr O'Grady at my request who attempted to give a more literal translation to the formula.

Pincher's version is this: Take this all of you and drink (it).

*Marrayi Minpilayi nyurralu wirrmanangulu*. This is my blood.

*Nyungu pijirri ngajungulyungarrajurtinaku nyurraku nyurraka malukupa*.

This is my blood...the very same which will be poured for you and for all.

*Kuwarrija muwarr pala ngajumilija yajalayi mayikupa winekupa.*

From this moment follow my word which has come from me in relation to the bread and wine.

*NgaJurigu nyirrimi nyungu jilyanangu*

When I am no longer with you, do this very same thing yourselves. This version presents some advances.

Whilst *Karajarri* had for my blood *ngajuKURA kunpulu*, *Nyangumarta* has the more grammatically correct *nyungu pijirri ngaju*. *Kura* is a possessive suffix meaning 'of' and with *NgaJu (kura)* means 'my'. It is used of alienable objects e.g. my money *ngajukura warnku*. It should have been *nangu kunpulu ngaju* because our Lord is referring to his own blood. Pincher has kept that rule and left out the possessive suffix in *Nyangumarta mili* and simply said *Nyungu pijirri ngaju* (not *ngajumili*).

The second factor is how – 'for you' is translated. *Nyurraku* means for you numerically but *nyurruKA* means for your advantage.

Two sentences try to give the sense of 'Do this in memory of me' as given above in the translation of the text.

The second version of the consecratory was given to me by Dr O'Grady when I asked him to translate the text given. His own particular emphases will be put in capitals. He has also accepted my gloss of how to translate the rest of it.

*Nyurralu WAKARRIZALU marrayi. NYUNGUJA minpalayi:* Take (this pannikin) and drink from it.

*PANNIKIN NYUNGU PUIRRI JARTINY NGAJU JARTINY* or  
*Njungu ngaju pijirri*

THIS PANNIKIN IS WITH MY BLOOD = THIS IS THE CUP OF MY BLOOD. This is my blood.

*PUIRRI KUWARRIJAJA NGARRAKUNYKUTUJA MUWARRJA:*  
The blood of the new and eternal word.

*MARNTUNGU PUIRRI JARULUPIJI NGAJUJA NYURRAKU WURRUNGU KIRRPINGI:*

I will bleed for you all on the cross.

*MARRUNGUKURRALU NGARLU KURLU JINAYINYI:* People have hurt my feelings (have sinned against me).

## *Nelen Yubu*

NGAJUJA PARRJANAJA: Having looked at me,  
PAJU KARRURYA: Let them feel sorry for me (let them repent on my account).

MUNU NGAWU WANTURYI: Do not be heedless of me.

NYUNGU JILIRYA: Do this thing for me.

It is in August 99 these lines are written. Recently I rediscovered Dr O'Grady's study. The original had been almost destroyed by silverfish and moisture, but fortunately I had made a photo copy of his version before they had made further inroads.

Recently I have begun to use a computer which has proved a blessing, and have begun to translate into English some Scriptural and catechetical material compiled in the local languages. The discovery of Dr O'Grady's version has given me impetus to have another go at the translation of the prayer over the wine.

I also looked up some translations from modern languages which gave me new insight how modern translators coped with the standard formula. Most are direct translation of the Latin text. The translation given from a German version was interesting. The relevant part is this...

*Dass ist der Kelch, des neuen und ewigen Bundes*

*Mein Blut, dass fuer euch und fuer alle vergossen wird, etc.*

That is the chalice of the new and everlasting covenant.

My blood which will be shed for you, etc.

In English and other languages 'blood' is mentioned twice.

This is the cup

of my blood...the blood of the new and eternal covenant, etc.

I wondered then if the structure given in German could help with the Aboriginal version.

The following is tentative till a meaningful translation presents itself.

At present I would venture the following, taking into account the suggestions made by friends and colleagues over the years. But at the outset may I mention two things, one a reflection and the other a quotation. The standard formula seems to be a collation of various texts formed into a whole. The formation of such texts would have been preceded and accompanied by prayerful catechesis and

scholarship. So much is taken for granted in these pithy statements. In these attempted versions priority has to be given to conveying the sense of the words if a literal translation is impossible. For example, chalice has been translated as cup, pannikin, bucket by some. Coastal dwellers would have possibly understood a bailer shell would have been appropriate, or others a coolaman which when sufficiently deep served as a water container among other things. I usually left the word out and translated 'this is the cup of my blood' as 'this is my blood'.

The second is a quote from the Concise Dictionary of Theology by G O'Collins SJ from the item 'Forgiveness':

(..Jesus forgave sins...the forgiveness of sins through baptism and in other ways requires repentance from us...) Through the shedding of his blood Our Lord has forgiven sinners till the end of the world...We have to accept forgiveness if we wish the evil in our hearts to be wiped away. This is done in a spiritual way through the power of the blood of Jesus crucified. Should not these two elements be incorporated into the text for the second consecratory prayer?

Here is a tentative text which invites, I hope, helpful comment:

*Nyungu Pannikin*, This is the Pannikin (cup),  
*Kuwarrijaja* (New) *Ngarrakunykuutja* (everlasting) *Muwarra* (word from)  
*Ngahypakataja* (good) *Kankarranguja* (from heaven) — of the new  
everlasting and good word from heaven.

Note: Is not the new, eternal and good word of God's offer to mankind, that *he is Love* — a love revealed in the OT, especially Hosea C11: (God loves us passionately. He is not apathetic), and secondly in the NT in the person of Jesus especially in his suffering death and resurrection.

*Nyungu Pijirri*, This blood  
*Ngulyungarra Jurtinaku Nyurraku Nyurruka Maluku* which will be poured  
out for you all (individually) and for your advantage and for all people  
(literally like in Greek) for the pouring out for you etc., indicating the  
present and/or the future)

*Pjukkurukurrangu Kurlu Jartinyku*

for all of you who are sorry for your sins

*Palajakupa Kurluny Kurlunjaku Nganin Nganinjaku Nyurramilijaku Purrany  
Pinaku.*



## Nelen Yubu

So that your wrong will be wiped away from you.

It is rather a mouthful but without translation it would appear like this:

*Nyungu pannikin, kuwarrijaja ngarrakunykutuja muwarrja ngahypakataja kankarranguja nyungu pijirri jurtinaku nyurraku nyurruka maluku, pajukutukurrangu kurlujartinyku, palajakupa kurluny kurlunyjaku. nganin nganinjaku nyurrarmilijaku purranypinaku.*

This is the pannikin of the new, everlasting and good word from heaven, of my blood which will be poured out for you and all, and for those who are sorry for their sins so that their sins will be wiped away (erased).

Finally, how does one translate: Do this in memory of me? O'Grady suggests some of the following. (His words are in capitals.)

*Ngajuja Yakanaja*

after I have left you

*Munu Ngawu Wantujyi*

Do not be heedless of me

*Nyungu Jilijija*

Do this thing for me

*mayikupa winekupa* (Pincher's addition)

in relation to the bread and wine.

This last version may be a valiant attempt to translate the literal sense of the words, but from a pastoral point of view I wonder if phrases like 'let them look at me on the cross' and (let them feel sorry for me = let them be profoundly moved to the depths of their inmost self) be more effective.

Another version would be to leave a version of the new and everlasting covenant last, till before the words 'do this in memory of me.'

Hence the text would run...

This is my blood

which will be shed for you and for all (on the cross)

let people look at me

let them feel sorry for their wrong (let them be forgiven).

This is my word (promise) for you from now and for always = this is the promise (covenant) I give to you from now and for always.  
Having left you .. you do as I have done the very same thing in relation to the bread and wine.

## **VARIOUS WAYS OF OFFERING A VERSION OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> CONSECRATORY PRAYER IN ENGLISH.**

### **1. Earliest version of the *Karajarri*.**

This is my blood.

Tomorrow my blood will flow for you all (on the cross)

People have done wrong to me (have hurt my deepest feelings) Let them look at me

Let them feel sorry for me (repent)

When I am no longer with you, do this.

### **2. Version from *Nyangumarta* by Pincher Dalan a *Nyangumarta* speaker.**

This is my blood

the very same (which will be) poured out for your benefit and for all.

From now, follow my own very word in relation to the bread and wine.

When I am no longer with you, do this very same thing for yourselves.

### **3. Version from *Nyangumarta* by Dr Geoffrey O'Grady (expert in Australian Linguistics).**

This pannikin is with my blood = This is the cup of my blood. The blood of the new and eternal word.

Tomorrow I will shed my blood on the cross for your benefit and for all.

People have hurt my deepest feelings (have sinned)

Having looked at me

Let them feel sorry (Let them feel sorry on my account).

After I have left you

Do not be heedless of me

Do this thing for me  
In relation to the bread and wine.

4. Version from modern German translation (Liturgical).

That is the pannikin (Cup)  
of the new, eternal and good word from heaven —  
my blood ( Note German version finishes here)  
which will be (poured out) for you individually, for your advantage  
and for all people,  
for all of you who are sorry for your sins,  
so that your wrong will be wiped away from you.  
After I have left you,  
Do not be heedless of me.  
Do this thing for me  
in relation to the bread and wine.

5. Another version leaves the new and everlasting covenant till later.

This is my blood  
which will be shed for you and for all (on the cross).  
Let people look at me,  
May they feel sorry for their wrong (Let them be forgiven.)  
*THIS IS MY WORD (PROMISE) TO YOU FROM NOW AND  
FOR ALWAYS.*  
Having left you,  
Do for yourselves the same (what I have done) in relation to my  
very words and the bread and wine.

6. Version of the 20<sup>th</sup> July 20000 KM.

This is my blood  
which will be shed for your benefit and for all.  
Because of this word and this blood  
From now and for always  
My Father feels sorry for all people (i.e. forgives them)  
and cleanses them from their wrong.  
Having left you, do for yourselves with all your heart the very same

thing which I have done in relation to the words and bread and wine.

7. Addendum August 3<sup>rd</sup> 2000.

Fr Fallon was emphatic as far as I can recall in stressing the love with which Our Lord shed his blood for us.

As I cannot as yet offer an abstract noun for love as such, I can only resort to alternatives like "I feel for you with all my heart" ...or.. "with my innermost self (from the bottom of my heart) I feel well disposed towards you."

Thus the text suggested on the 20th of July could be modified in the following way:

'This is my blood which will be shed for you with all my heart for your benefit,' etc.

The words 'which will be shed for you' are passive and can only be translated into the languages at Bidyadanga in the following way:

This is my blood shedding for you for....

cf. This is meat cooking for you, etc.

This is the meat which will be cooked for you.

What did our Lord actually say in Aramaic?

Whatever he did say, the formula fixed by the Church must be adhered to as closely as possible. (How do other indigenous people translate this thought?)

Could we venture to offer as in version 1:

Tomorrow my blood will flow for you and for all ( on the cross)

or

I will shed my blood for you on the cross with all my heart....

*Videant consules! (melius) Sodales in re missionaria in adjutorium meum festinare favete!*

## From the Secretary's Desk

A sparkling, cloudless day, nippy, full of expectations...it made us hope the next seventeen days would be as inviting as this, the first day of September 2000 when we left Sydney by road bound for Alice Springs and a pilgrimage into the back country to spend time with some of our indigenous neighbours. That 24-day trip to Arltunga and back was a long trek, clocking up 6,130km in the three weeks before our car ran up the drive again at Kensington in NSW, a world away.

After early Mass and breakfast Nelen Yubu's staff set out to drive over the Blue Mountains, along the Great Western Highway through Bathurst and Orange, on to Dubbo. Tired but happy we certainly had no trouble finding accommodation here despite the fact that Sydney was preparing to teem with visitors for the Games, and we'd been warned that NSW roads would be overcrowded.

Again next morning, blue skies. So on we went to Nyngan for a quick counter lunch, turning then to the long haul across the

western plains, resplendent in blue-grey saltbush and softly blowing Mitchell grass, till we pulled up outside Wilcannia, weary but still excited at being in the heart of our beloved



Outback. Here we relaxed by the lazy Darling, cooking our meals on an open campfire beside that once busy waterway with its ancient river gums housing hundreds of talking birds.

What an attractive place *this should* be. It is where boats used to come right up-river to the inland with their cargo in the days before the river silted up. We drove along the wide side street where a number of old houses, now closely shuttered, hold their secrets to themselves: tales of yesteryear. Ever fascinated by this old town, picturesque in its own way, I have the urge to resurrect those houses, restore them, fill a little shop with artefacts, tools and timeless Australiana to tell the world that here is historic

treasure for those passing through—be it by car, coach or humping the bluey. Wilcannia!

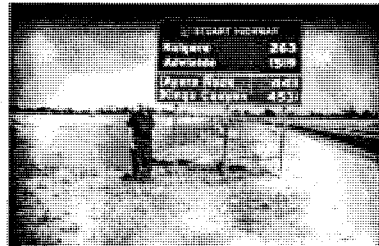
Waking by the river next morning, the sky was still blue. A sad point is that the Darling River here is now grey and murky, an effect we learned not only of flood waters but also of the red carp which stirs up the bottom and can leave its roe buried under the mud in times of drought, maybe for years, to repopulate in great abundance as soon as the water returns to a respectable level. Groups of laughing Aboriginal children waved to us, but we didn't see anybody fishing.

So, a little sad, we rejoined the great curve of the Barrier Highway, across limitless country of grey saltbush, spinifex and the odd stunted tree, but ever the wide open spaces of sky meeting earth till we rolled into Broken Hill. Being Sunday the city was practically deserted, so we had dinner and pushed on westwards.

To watch the road ahead till it goes over the edge of the world, to feel that freedom of being poised between heaven and earth, to breathe warm clean air instead of the smog of towns and cities, all so bracing that, like the Aborigines, I wonder if in the

next life my spirit will find itself wandering out there in search of nostalgic peace.

Eventually we meet some lonely hills, the railway line, odd huts and farms and gradually the greening landscape leading us towards South Australia. Then through Port Augusta and on up The Track, heading for the red centre. At this stage I am impatient to escape as far as possible from civilization, into the lonely stretches of unpeopled wastes, passing the odd road train, sometimes seeing nothing at all that moves except emus, dingos, eagles overhead lying on the wind, or unhappily, kangaroos that have been slaughtered on the roads—yet nary a rabbit. This is our beloved country, Glendambo, Coober Pedy, Cadney Park homestead, Marla Bore and into the NT to Kulgera. Soon we'll hit the outskirts of the Alice and on to



receive a cheery welcome at the presbytery from Fr Brian Healy msc our hospitable host from

way back, supported by Fr Pat Mullens sj, and Br Ed Bennett msc, at the end of our five days on the road. As in the past at Alice Springs, we were treated to the famous comfortable accommodation and luscious meals, not to mention the spirited company of Fr Healy and his confreres. We are indeed grateful for their hospitality.

A very brave lady we met at the presbytery was Michele. She had been the toast of Alice Springs when she guided her wheelchair from the Gap to the Lutheran Church, carrying the Olympic Torch! Michele was cheered by well-wishers as she steered her way past the crowds lining her course. Not least were the excited children of all colours and creeds proudly and vociferously racing along beside their friend as she triumphantly took her turn in honour of the Olympics 2000 in faraway Sydney.



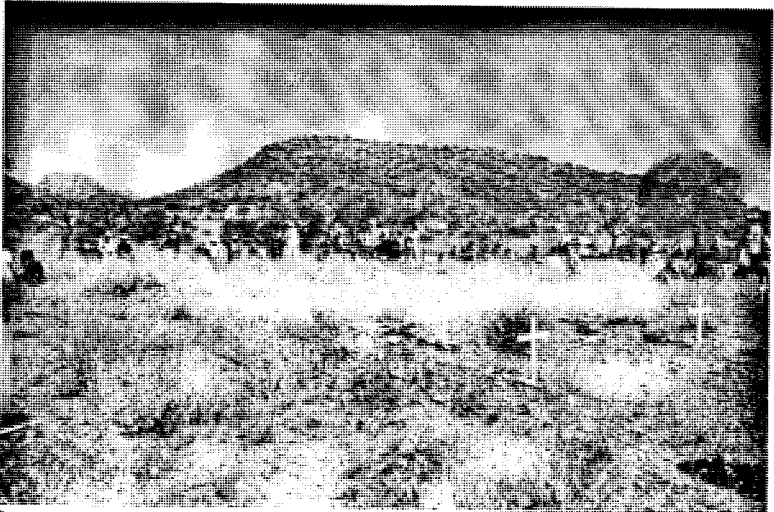
Camp at the Arltunga pub

The trip to Arltunga, Santa Teresa, the Spring are dealt with elsewhere in this issue. But we all, including the Sisters who pitched their tents with us in the bush, on the plain, in dry creekbeds, have very special memories. I suppose the place which touched me most during the whole pilgrimage was the cemetery on a remote hillside where Mass was concelebrated by four priests for 40 Aboriginal people who had been buried there between 1942 and 1953. They had died at Arltunga, many of them children, and were taken up to the red hills overlooking their camps. During Mass we were invited to sit with some of the Aboriginals in amongst the graves each of which bore an unmarked white cross; and I sat by one (despite the prickly spinifex!) dwelling on the life of the person whose remains lay beside me.

Our blue skies are full of hope; the red cliffs beetling nearby protective of their charges; dingoes might roam there, birds build their nests in slender-leaved trees of the desert, and voices from the past heard by those attuned to the lilting calls of their ancestors—such an experience cannot fail to draw us all together in love.

Finally, drifting homewards, we found ourselves at Morgan, a pretty little township on the

life-jacket. Yes, he was about to open the lock! He took us along with him, answering our



Murray boasting a car-ferry which crosses the river in three minutes, and runs every day (and all night) 365 days a year, absolutely toll free. All you have to do is blow your horn and a man will appear to ferry you across, no matter the hour.

Another fascinating stop was just outside Mildura on the Murray, where there is a river lock. All my life I have been baffled by the mechanics of these locks, unable to visualize their operation, so here was our chance to investigate. Nobody was on duty, but after awhile an official arrived, struggling into a

questions and describing the intricacies of operating locks, such as how to open the upriver gates while a boat waited in the stream; letting the water rush into the lock and at a certain level opening the lower gates to allow it slowly to descend and rejoin the river down-stream—during the course of which we ran up and down beside the lock, anxious not to miss a thing, while our host explained every detail of the performance to us, even beyond the call of duty, till our education was complete.

Back to city life now, but like the drover 'whose restless heart



*Nelen Yubu*

must rove for rest' I long to be  
off again to those remote places  
where warm breezes filter  
through desert trees and night  
birds call to each other across the  
plain.

The chord of the centre, like  
the mysterious hum of the north,  
will always be beckoning me.

A Happy Christmas 2000 and  
safe travel to all our readers.

**Secretary Keren**



**Keren at the Miraculous Spring, Santa Teresa**