



Perpetual Day of Remembrance

**Shine the Light
of Christ**

**Resources for School
Communities**

Friday 15 September 2023



mn.catholic.org.au

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as Australia's First Peoples and the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we work to build a stronger, more equitable, kinder society that values children, young people, families and individuals.

We honour the wisdom of and pay respect to, Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the spiritual culture of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia.

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle is located on the traditional lands of the Awabakal, Biripi, Darkinjung, Kamilaroi, Wiradjuri, Wonnarua and Worimi people.

This diocese acknowledges the important Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander occupation and care of the land on which we live. We acknowledge our Traditional Custodians' continual spiritual and cultural connection to Country. We acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as having been on this land for over 60,000 years.

This is the acknowledgement made in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan launched on 18 August 2022.





Ode to the Light of Christ

Come, let us walk in the Light of the Lord.
Let us not fear the past
when our hearts were heavy. (Is. 2:5)
Let us Shine the Light of Christ.

Come, let us bring light from the darkness.
Let us make evil good
and find sweet in the bitter. (Is. 5:20)
Let us Shine the Light of Christ.

Come, let us weep together
when the light grew dark with the clouds,
from the darkness and distress. (Is. 5:30)
Let us Shine the Light of Christ.

Come, let us walk with our brothers and sisters,
those who have walked in darkness. (Is. 9:2)
Let them see the great Light of God
and let us Shine the Light of Christ.

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Prayer Resources for Schools

Schools are important ...

The focus of the Church response to the *Perpetual Day of Remembrance* is the change or conversion that is at the heart of God's call to discipleship.

The need and desire for personal and communal change emerges when we encounter Jesus, the one who shows us how to live a good human life. The more I know and love Jesus, the more I want to become the best person I can be, and the more we want to become the best community we can be, radiating the all-inclusive love and mercy of God. Our task is cultural change and that's the hardest task we face.

School communities are key to forging the path of cultural change which is not only the intent of the *Perpetual Day of Remembrance* but also the imperative of the Gospel 'That all may have life and have it to the full'. (Jn 10:10)

The school community is the ideal place to shape young hearts and minds – children, teenagers and young parents – according to the heart and mind of God. As a Gospel focused community seeking always to embody the mercy and forgiveness of God, the school is the safe place where young and old experience the freedom that comes from being sorry and forgiven, being other focused and community focused. The school is the place where societal change begins.

Faced with such possibilities and opportunities, as people of faith ... we pray. We pray about the everyday things we all do that can leave others feeling hurt and knocked about. The prayer 'In the light of your love' focuses on some of these behaviours and prays for the grace to be changed so we better shine the light of Christ. We can do this unafraid because as people of faith we turn to our God who we know is full of mercy.

Schools are privileged places that hold the promise and hope of a culture renewed in the light of Christ. Schools do this every day as the endeavour to keep Christ at the heart of everything. Please seize this additional opportunity with both hands and see where the journey takes you. It is important to all of us.

This year's resource has been simplified and we hope that is helpful. Overall, we recommend keeping it simple.

The background timeline for the *Perpetual Day of Remembrance* has been revised as a one-page diagram which is available [here](#).

As always, we hope you will complete the survey that will be available on the diocesan

Introduction

Marking the *Perpetual Day of Remembrance* is challenging for all of us. We appreciate that this is even more so for school communities and that staff are consequently hesitant.

We encourage you to keep it simple. This might include **ONE prayer** for staff and **ONE prayer** for students, ideally on 15 September. To assist with that we have provided simple options that offer enough guidance and support to free staff to identify the most appropriate way

to mark the day in schools, ideally in smaller class groups. Such groups enable simple and meaningful prayer that engages students and staff.

It may be helpful to pray with staff on Wednesday September 14, as a way of preparing them for prayer with their class group on Thursday.

Following is a basic 'ritual outline' and a number of prayer options that can be inserted into the ritual outline. It is hoped the options accommodate the needs of different school communities and classes. Some people will develop their own responses. Remember, we recommend keeping it simple and doing **one** thing.

Organisation

Pastoral Care is a strong dimension in all schools and these normal processes will ensure sensitivity and care is shown to all members of the community – staff and students – on this day.

Some schools, particularly secondary schools, might consider organising the prayer to be prayed throughout the school at a designated time. This would mean the Introduction could be done by the Principal or another member of the leadership team. This may relieve some pressure on staff who could focus on being prepared to pray the prayer in their class.

Preparation

Individual staff will need:

- a candle, matches and anything else you might like to use such as a piece of material.
- to choose a prayer from the following options.
- to be aware of how the Introduction is to be done – by you or the Principal. We recommend going over it ahead of time so it sounds natural.

Ritual Outline

It is hoped this outline will assist you to pray with staff and in classes. Please keep it simple

Once you have the candle in position and the class is settled begin the prayer as follows.

Introduction

You may use the following text as written, or as a guide for your own words.

Leader: Today is September 15, an important day in our Diocese. It is known as our *Perpetual Day of Remembrance*. Today we pause to remember that children have not always been safe. Lots of things have changed since then. You will recall that last week we celebrated *National Child Protection Week* when we highlighted all the good things we do these days to make sure children and young people feel safe and supported in our schools and the broader Church.

It is important that all of us do our part to make sure everyone in our school – students, staff and families – feel safe, respected and supported. Today is a day to focus on Jesus and pray that we will keep changing and growing and behaving in ways that allow all people in our community to be safe, to be respected and to be free to learn and grow.

This prayer is called 'Shine the Light of Christ'. So, let us pray together that Jesus will be our light, helping us to see how to love and respect each other so that our school community radiates the love and compassion of God.

I invite you to be still and silent for about a minute, and open your heart and mind to the light of Christ ...

Light the candle and allow a period of silence. If possible stretch it to a minute or whatever is comfortable for the group.

Prayer

*Pray the prayer you have chosen from the options below.
Allow 5 - 10 seconds silence at the end of the prayer.*

Conclusion

Leader: As we blow out the candle let us commit ourselves to shine the light of Christ in all we do and say today and every day. Lest we forget.

Blow out the candle.

Option 1: In the Light of Your Love prayer

This prayer is one of the permanent elements of the *Perpetual Day of Remembrance*.

Use either the following full version of the prayer, or the revised version (in the box) below. The latter version may be more appropriate for primary school.

In the Light of Your Love

God with us,
you have made us in your image
and filled us with the breath of your divine life.
Through the life of Jesus
you show us the way to live in the light of your love.

Create a clean heart in us O God.

Where people are disempowered
may we shine the light of your justice.

Where there is privilege and prestige
may we shine the light of your humility.

Where there is dishonesty and denial
may we shine the light of your truth.

Where transparency is lacking, and agendas are hidden
may we shine the light of your integrity.

Where there is fear
may we shine the light of your courage.

Where there is judgement
may we shine the light of your compassion.

Where there is disrespect
may we shine the light of your love.

Where people feel silenced
may we shine the light of your word.

Where people feel excluded
may we shine the light of your acceptance.

Where there is sin
may we shine the light of your forgiveness.

Create a clean heart in us O God.

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Revised Prayer *In the Light of Your Love*

God with us,
you have made us in your image
and filled us with your love.
Through the life of Jesus
you show us the way to live a good life.

Where people are 'put down'
may we shine the light of your strength.

Where there is dishonesty and denial
may we shine the light of your truth.

Where there is fear
may we shine the light of your courage.

Where there is judgement
may we shine the light of your compassion.

Where there is disrespect
may we shine the light of your love.

Where people feel silenced
may we shine the light of your word.

Where people feel excluded
may we shine the light of your acceptance.

Where there is sin
may we shine the light of your forgiveness.

Option 2: Use a suitable song

The following suggestions have been made by some teachers in response to a request for inclusion of age-appropriate songs that promote positive relationships. Please note, most of the songs listed below are under One License. The use of Carrie Newcomer's *If Not Now*, is intended for listening or watching the clip as no permission has been granted for the use of lyrics.

- [A Rightful Place](#) by Steve Angrisano.
- [10,000 Reasons \(Bless the Lord\)](#) by Steve Angrisano. This one is not as strongly connected but might work for you.
- [The Commons: Christ our Light has Come](#) by Steve Angrisano and Curtis Stephan. The immediate context for this one is Christmas. It picks up the strong PDoR themes of light and darkness. It provides an opportunity to reflect on the deep truth that the cradle and the cross are all part of the one Paschal Mystery of Christ.
- Richard Cootes music has a variety of possibilities including:
 - *The Lord is my Light*
 - *Breath of God*
- [We Turn To You](#) by Michael Mangan.
- *We Sing for Those Whose Song is Silent* by John Bell. Thanks to Anne Millard, Cath Mahony and the Communications Team it is available on the [diocesan website](#) in two forms: [video](#) and [audio file](#). Not appropriate for students but may be for staff.
- [If Not Now](#) by Carrie Newcomer. The song is about a change of heart.
 - This is a commercial song that can be purchased from various music platforms.
- This year Zimmerman Service Healing and Support have worked with Elizabeth Seysener, a survivor from the Clergy Abused Network (CAN), and composer David Banney, to commission a piece of music titled 'The Innocents'. A recording is available on the [diocesan website](#) as an [audio file](#).



Option 3: 'Ode to the Light of Christ'

Found on p 3. This can be used for personal or communal prayer, or as part of a more formal prayer. If the latter, in keeping with the traditional way we proclaim an Ode, for example on Anzac Day, we recommend that it be read by one person and listened to by the community.

Option 4: The Our Father

Pray the Our Father.

Within our rich tradition of Christian prayer, the *Our Father* is a centrepiece. It is often recommended as the starting place for people wanting to learn to pray.

Some who find The Our Father deeply meaningful might commit to praying it at a specific time every day during Child Protection Week, up to and including the Perpetual Day of Remembrance on 15 September.

Use the version and language with which you are most familiar and comfortable. The Inclusive Bible uses the phrase 'Abba God'.

Option 5: Praying a form of the Examen

This traditional form of prayer lends itself to the *Perpetual Day of Remembrance Prayer*.

The following outline with its examples may help you. If students/staff are not familiar with this prayer it would be best to take only a short time with each step – perhaps 10-15 seconds.

1. Ask God for light.
God fill me with the light of your love, so I see this day/time as you see it.
2. Give God Thanks.
Invite people to quietly recall the good they have experienced during the day/lesson ... and to thank God for these gifts.
3. Review the day/class with God.
Invite people to look back over the day/time recalling anything that left them feeling disappointed or hurt ...
4. Talk to God about what you need or would like to change.
Ask God to help you to become more ...
5. Look forward to the coming day/class/afternoon.
Ask God to be with you and guide you ...

Other options

Some of the following suggestions are from teachers:

- **Use contemporary images** of people working together, side by side to make the point that working together can heal and mend.
- Provide an opportunity for students to **write their own prayer**.
- The Magnificat is the gospel for *Perpetual Day of Remembrance Sunday*. It would lend itself to **scriptural prayer** with most age groups. You will find it in the Children's Lectionary on p. 564. (Lk 1: 46-56). This could be offered as an option for students who are looking for an extended form of prayer.

Healing and Support

The *Zimmerman Service Healing and Support Team* provides support and assistance to survivors and their relatives. To engage with this service please call 49230636 or email ZimmermanService@healingandsupport.org.au.

To commemorate Perpetual Day of Remembrance 2023, Zimmerman House at 5 Selma St, Newcastle West will be open for survivors and relatives from 12-4pm on the 15 September for those who wish to drop in.

The Healing and Support Team are also available should our prayer response cause distress for any person, please make contact as above.

There will be a review of prayer resources for people to complete after the day. We appreciate your feedback.

Thank you for your commitment to stand with our brothers and sisters who are suffering, including those who have died. Thank you too for your commitment to shine the light of Christ in our Church and neighbourhoods. Together we can be a sign of hope.

Louise Gannon rsj, Diocesan Manager Worship and Prayer

With the Diocesan Liturgy Council and the Standing Committee: Perpetual Day of Remembrance. Allen Brierley, Monique Crick, Fiona Duque, Uta France, Louise Gannon, Daniel Lee, Petrina Massey, Magda Mycak, Cathy White, Ed Wright, [Andrew Slater].

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Notes

Shine the Light of Christ

Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle

PO BOX 756 Newcastle NSW 2300 | 841 Hunter Street Newcastle West 2302

P 02 4979 1200 **E** enquiries@mn.catholic.org.au **ABN** 91 605 046 457