

AUSTRALIA DAY



Every January the celebration of our national day is an opportunity for us to give thanks for the blessings we share. In the midst of the debates about the appropriateness of the date, we can still focus on the positive things that make Australia such a successful multicultural society. We also recognize that there are many challenges that we still face if we are to ensure that all Australians share the blessings we often take for granted.

The bicentenary of European settlement in 1988 was the catalyst that led the Catholic Church in Australia to introduce a Mass for Australia Day with its own prayers and readings. Among those prayers is a Preface for Australia Day. The Preface is the introduction to the Eucharistic Prayer. It is always addressed to God the Father and leads us into the great prayer of thanksgiving (the Eucharistic Prayer) by reminding us of the people and events for which we give thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In the Preface for Australian Day we pray: ***From ancient times you made this land a home for many peoples and became their rock of strength; when they were hungry, you gave them food, and when thirsty, water even in the desert.*** The images recall the story of the Exodus, the journey of the People of Israel from slavery in Egypt to liberation. They also obviously remind us of the indigenous peoples of this ancient land.

Our parish website now includes an ***Acknowledgement of Country***. As we have noted on the parish heritage sign for the first church (located near the Parramatta Road gates), prior to European settlement the Wangal clan of the Eora Nation lived on this land for 10,000 years.

A challenge for all of us is to find better ways to protect our fragile environment. To do that we also need to learn from those who were the custodians of this land for countless generations before European settlement.

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