



Bishop Eugene Hurley with parishioners at the inauguration of Bishop Gauci, Darwin, 2018.

# Catholic Mission to Aboriginal Australia

*There is such a vast history of deep spirituality in our First Nations People in Australia.*

*Pope John Paul II in his famous message which he gave in the Australian heartland when he addressed the Aboriginal peoples, stated that the Catholic Church will be lacking in its full expression if it does not embrace the spirituality of our Aboriginal people.*

*The embracing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander spirituality within the wider Catholic spirituality is deeply enriching.*

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Bishops Commission for Relations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples **Pastoral Letter, 2019.**

There are 130,000 Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Catholics

St John Paul  
II, Alice  
Springs,  
1986.



Pope John Paul II, Alice Springs, November 1986.



## John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Oceania*, 2001, n. 28.

Unjust economic policies are especially damaging to indigenous peoples, young nations & their traditional cultures; & it is the Church's task to help indigenous cultures preserve their identity & maintain their traditions. ...

A special case is that of the Australian Aborigines whose culture struggles to survive. For many thousands of years they have sought to live in harmony with the often harsh environment of their "big country"; but now their identity & culture are gravely threatened. In more recent times, however, their joint efforts to ensure survival & gain justice have begun to bear fruit ...

The Church will support the cause of all indigenous peoples who seek a just & equitable recognition of their identity & their rights; & the Synod Fathers expressed support for the aspirations of indigenous people for a just solution to the complex question of the alienation of their lands.

Whenever the truth has been suppressed by governments & their agencies or even by Christian communities, the wrongs done to the indigenous peoples need to be honestly acknowledged. The Synod supported the establishment of "Truth Commissions", where these can help resolve historical injustices & bring about reconciliation within the wider community or the nation. The past cannot be undone, but honest recognition of past injustices can lead to measures & attitudes which will help to rectify the damaging effects for both the indigenous community & the wider society.

The Church expresses deep regret & asks forgiveness where her children have been or still are party to these wrongs. Aware of the shameful injustices done to indigenous peoples in Oceania, the Synod Fathers apologized unreservedly for the part played in these by members of the Church, especially where children were forcibly separated from their families.



Deacon Boniface Perdiert (1937-2019), Australia's first indigenous permanent deacon & elder of the Kardu Diminin clan.

## Benedict XVI, World Youth Day, Sydney, 2008.

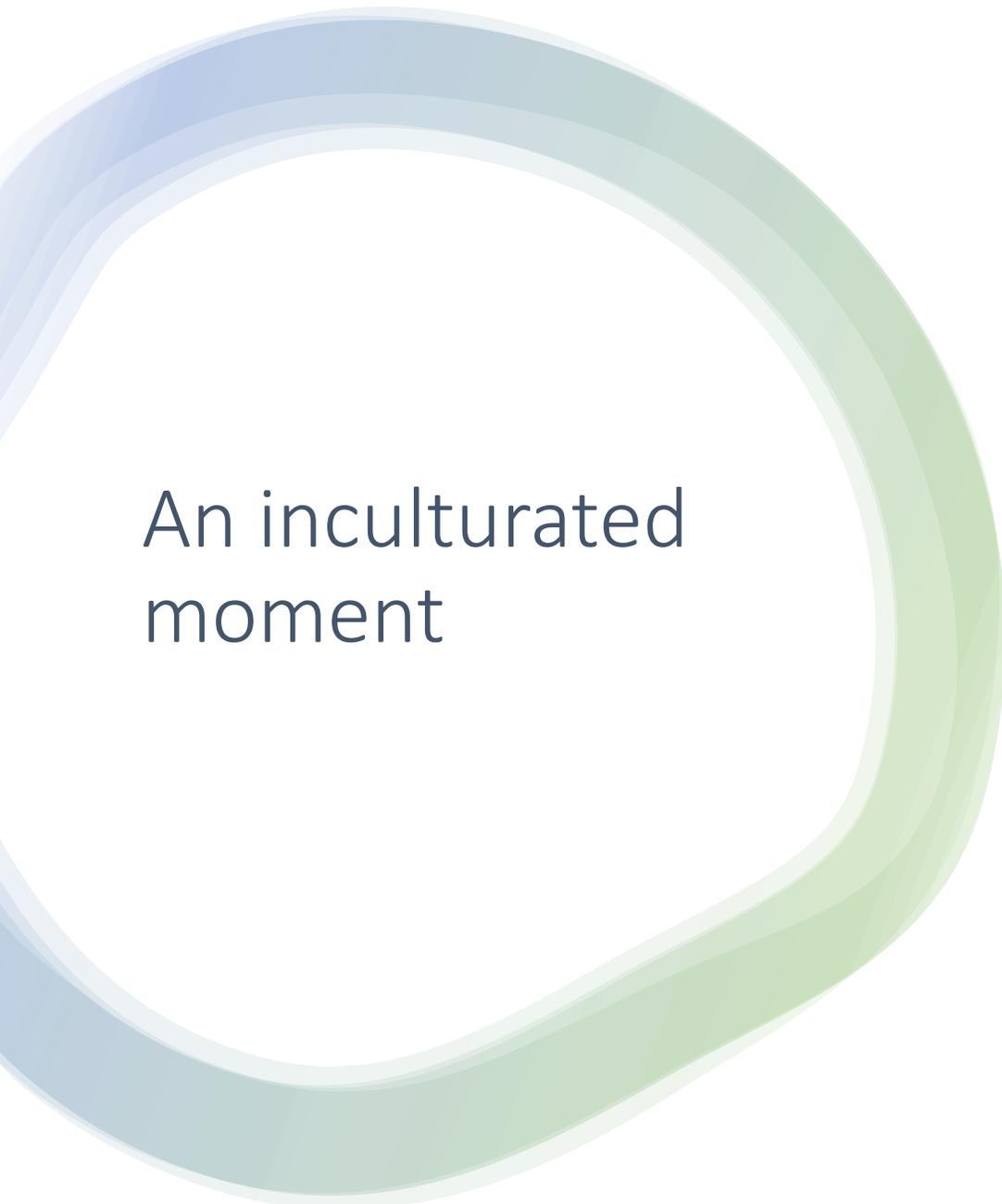


The Church in Australia, as well as being the youngest of any continent, is also one of the most cosmopolitan. Since the first European settlement here in the late eighteenth century, this country has become a home not only to generations of Europeans, but to people from every corner of the globe. The immense diversity of the Australian population today gives a particular vibrancy to what may still be considered, in comparison with much of the rest of the world, a young nation.

Yet for thousands of years before the arrival of Western settlers, the sole inhabitants of the land were indigenous peoples, the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. Their ancient heritage forms an essential part of the cultural landscape of modern Australia. Thanks to the Australian Government's courageous decision to acknowledge the injustices committed against the indigenous peoples in the past, concrete steps are now being taken to achieve reconciliation based on mutual respect. Rightly, you are seeking to close the gap between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians regarding life expectancy, educational achievement and economic opportunity! This example of reconciliation offers hope to peoples all over the world who long to see their rights affirmed and their contribution to society acknowledged and promoted.

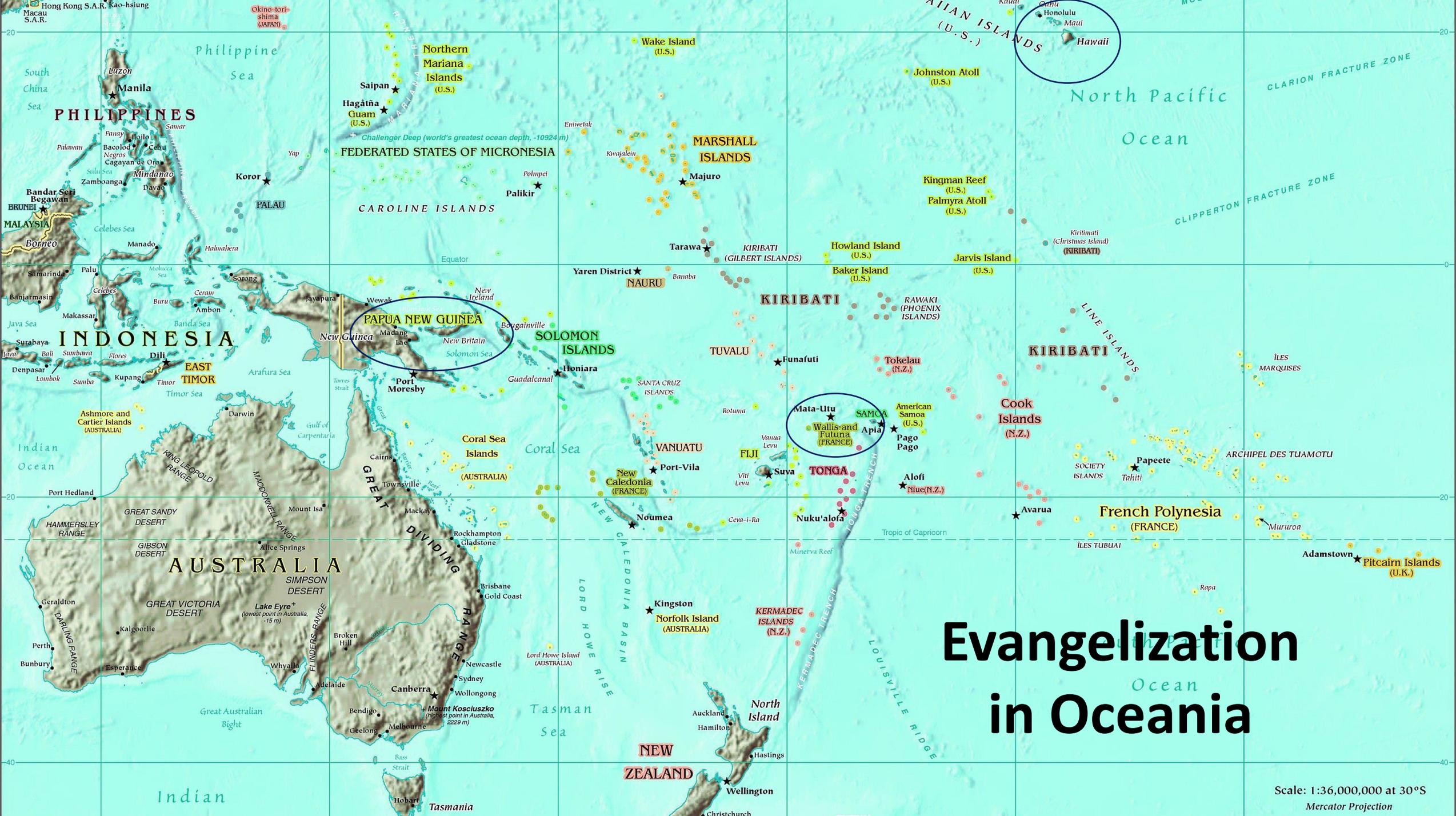
Social Justice Sunday Statement,  
*The Heart of Our Country:  
Dignity and justice for our  
Indigenous Sisters and Brothers,*  
Australian Catholic Bishops  
Conference, 2006.





An inculturated  
moment

<https://www.facebook.com/BishopRichardUmbers/videos/888790164855385>



# Evangelization in Oceania

Scale: 1:36,000,000 at 30°S  
Mercator Projection



## Peter Chanel St Peter Chanel (1802-1841)

- French Marist
- Martyred on the Island of Futuna
- Patron Saint of Oceania

# St Damian De Veuster (1840-1889)

- Belgian Sacred Heart missionary
- Mission to the leper colony on Moloka'i in the Kingdom of Hawai'i. The settlement of Kalaupapa was on a peninsula backed by steep cliffs & bounded on three sides by the Pacific Ocean.



# Blessed Peter Torot (1912-1945)

- Papua New Guinea
- Catechist & Martyr

