



Vox Populi

11 July 2024

Throughout the past week, the Church in Australia has joined in the celebration of NAIDOC Week.

NAIDOC Week is an opportunity to acknowledge and honour the history, culture, and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Social justice is an important part of our Catholic faith. In Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders face many disadvantages in health, education, and access to basic needs.

The Catholic Church, through its welfare agencies and advocacy, can play an important role in helping to mend those gaps and ensure all people are able to access basic needs, regardless of their background.

Beyond social justice, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should play an important role in the life of the Australian Church.

Pope John Paul II told Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people during a visit to Alice Springs in 1986: “You are part of Australia and Australia is part of you. And the Church herself in Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until you have made your contribution to her life and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others.”

Earlier this year, the Australian Catholic bishops approved the Mass of the Land of the Holy Spirit (Missa Terra Spiritus Sancti), a liturgy which incorporates elements

of Aboriginal language and culture, for use in the Diocese of Broome.

In the spirit of Synodality, it's important we listen to all voices to make sure people know they are loved by God and welcomed into His Church.

On Monday, the Church will celebrate the memorial of Saint Bonaventure, a 13th century Friar who helped steer to steer the Franciscans to prominence throughout Europe, and on Tuesday, we celebrate the memorial of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the patron of the Carmelites.

Both the Franciscans and Carmelites have made a profound impact on the life of the Church in Australia, most particularly serving underprivileged or vulnerable communities.