



Edmund Rice Centre

Awareness. Advocacy. Action

ERC JUSTICE UPDATES

July 2021 No.50

Dear All,

Welcome to the 50th Edition of ERC Justice Updates, our regular newsletter from the Edmund Rice Centre, on matters relating to human rights, first nations and environmental justice.

The power of positivity in this ever changing world we live in, is crucial to those working in the social justice field who must never lose hope:

"You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference and you have to decide what kind of a difference you want to make."

—Jane Goodall

If you have a story or any material you would like to include in Justice Updates - please do send along. Also any feedback is much appreciated and please feel free to forward the newsletter on to those who may be interested.

Previous editions are available at <https://www.erc.org.au/newsletters>.

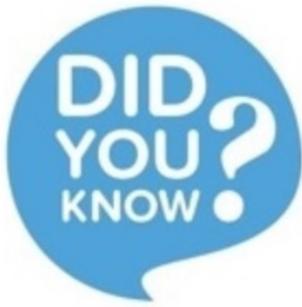
Peace & Blessings

Marita

Communications Project Officer,

Marita McInerney

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that there may be articles in this publication with names and images of deceased people.



On Friday 16th July 2021, the Australian Government will have detained men & women on Nauru & Manus Island/Port Moresby for 2893 days.



A recently released report undertaken by five United Nations agencies entitled 'The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021 found that under the shadow of the COVID -19 pandemic world hunger increased in 2020. A snapshot of results is as follows:

- **The prevalence of undernourishment (PoU) increased by 1.5 percentage points after remaining virtually unchanged in the previous five years.**
- **More than half the world's undernourished are found in Asia (418 million), more than one third in Africa (282 million). Compared with 2019 figures 2020 had 46 million more in Africa and 57 million more in Asia, and about 14 million more in Latin America were affected by hunger.**
- **New projections confirm that that hunger will not be eradicated by 2030. If all remains constant around 660million may still face hunger in part due to lasting affects of pandemic on global food security.**
- **Nearly one in three people in the world (2.37 billion) did not have access to adequate food in 2020, an increase of almost 320 million people in just one year.**
- **Close to 12% of the global population was severely food insecure in 2020, representing 928 million people -148 million more than in 2019.**

- In 2020 it is estimated that 22% (149.2 million) of children under 5 years of age were affected by stunting, 6.7% (45.4 million) were suffering from wasting and 5.7% (38.9 million) were overweight.
- An estimated 29.9% of women aged 15 to 49 years in 2019 were suffering from anaemia. Anaemia is now a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). Data showed stark regional differences: 30% of women in Africa and Asia were affected compared to 14.6% of women in Northern America and Europe.

Read Key Messages from the Report in full.

http://www.fao.org/3/cb4474en/online/cb4474en.html#chapter-Key_message

The Story of NAIDOC

The Struggle for Rights

June 2021



NAIDOC is a celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and achievement. But the origins of NAIDOC are steeped in the struggle for Indigenous rights. The 1938 Day of Mourning is central to understanding NAIDOC. To highlight the importance of NAIDOC week the Edmund Rice Centre explains the Day of Mourning.

Click this link to download full presentation.

<https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/erc/pages/92/attachments/original/1625475746>

[/The_Story_of_NAIDOC_050721.pdf?1625475746&fbclid=IwAR0ZN7BmmdCL968aNBYEOKiglg5B9nDUc-A4hAQADwxaKgy5SWDBt9aFTIs](https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/erc/pages/92/attachments/original/1625475746/The_Story_of_NAIDOC_050721.pdf?1625475746&fbclid=IwAR0ZN7BmmdCL968aNBYEOKiglg5B9nDUc-A4hAQADwxaKgy5SWDBt9aFTIs)

This presentation is the work of Darryl Cronin

Darryl is a researcher in the First Nations programme at the Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education. Based in Darwin, Northern Territory his research focuses on promoting human rights and justice for Indigenous Australians. His recent book titled - Trapped by History: The Indigenous-State Relationship in Australia - is published by Rowman and Littlefield.



'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander empowerment and self-determination can be powerfully protective against psychological distress.' Photograph: Jonny Weeks/The Guardian

Healing among Indigenous people is more crucial now than ever. Here's a way forward

Mental healthcare needs to be decolonised and incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and wisdom

Pat Dudgeon and Zena Burgess, The Guardian, 6th July 2021

This year Naidoc week focuses on healing: healing Country and strengthening the social, emotional, spiritual and cultural wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

For many peoples and communities who already experience marginalisation and disadvantage – including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – the Covid-19 pandemic has compounded and highlighted existing issues, such as a lack of housing and access to health care, food insecurity, financial

distress, unemployment and poverty.

Due to the higher prevalence of issues associated with social determinants of health, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples experience significant ongoing health and mental health challenges.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are nearly twice as likely to die by suicide and are almost three times more likely to be psychologically distressed than non-Indigenous Australians.

There's never been a more critical time for healing. But what does that look like?

A more holistic approach

There is a growing body of work dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and emotional wellbeing frameworks, research and practices.

The term social and emotional wellbeing is used by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to describe the social, emotional, spiritual and cultural wellbeing of a person.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, health and wellbeing is viewed holistically and sense of self includes the individual, their kin (family), community and Country (land, sea, and sky). Mental and physical wellbeing are viewed as important domains that are inextricably linked and of equal value to the other necessary domains of wellbeing.

The term social and emotional wellbeing recognises that a person's wellbeing is influenced by current policies and past events, such as the effects and aftermath of colonisation and the cultural determinants of health, including systemic racism, dispossession of land, social exclusion and intergenerational trauma.

Protective social and cultural determinants – such as community cohesion and cultural revitalisation, self-determination and connection to Country and spirituality (ancestors) – are also recognised.

But Australia's mental health system is built on a western viewpoint, where western knowledge and methodologies are the default approach to psychological frameworks. Little recognition is given to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander worldviews, wisdom, knowledge and methods, which span more

than 60,000 years and represent the resilience of the oldest living culture.

Psychologists know how important it is for people to feel heard and understood. Research shows that better therapeutic relationships with patients lead to better outcomes.

This is especially true within the wider mental health care system. How can a system help you if it doesn't understand or even acknowledge you, your community and your culture?

Read More:

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/jul/06/healing-among-indigenous-people-is-more-crucial-now-than-ever-heres-a-way-forward?utm_term=2bbadd87f367545ccf9f9d65755da3f0&utm_campaign=GuardianTodayAUS&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=GTAU_email



Counsellors for several refugees in the Melbourne detention centre are raising urgent health concerns as a result of the hunger strike. Photograph: James Ross/AAP

Refugee hunger strike at Melbourne detention centre ends after

17 days with detainees in hospital

Group of mostly Iranian detainees are asking to be released into the community while awaiting resettlement

Saba Vasefi, The Guardian, 7th July 2021

A hunger strike by refugees held at a Melbourne immigration detention centre has been called off after some of the protesters became dangerously ill and were admitted to hospital.

The group of mostly Iranian refugees, who are protesting against conditions in the centre and want to be released into the community, said they had “reluctantly stopped” their hunger strike on Saturday – some 17 days after it began.

Most of the refugees were transferred from Nauru or Manus Island to Australia on medical grounds and have been approved for resettlement in the US or Canada.

settlements and hospital on the island of Nauru

They now say they should be released into the community, as almost 100 other medevac refugees have been, while awaiting resettlement.

“Why can’t we receive the same support to be free as the other 100 medevac refugees,” 34-year-old Iranian refugee Vali asked.

“Living for eight years as if in lockdown, my body and mind have been incapacitated.”

Vali’s case is indicative of the experiences of many of the group. He has been approved for US resettlement but was told by the Australian Border Force that he must remain in immigration detention or return to Nauru until IHMS approves his ability to travel to the US.

Vali ended up in detention in Melbourne after he underwent an operation on Nauru in 2016, which resulted in a pin being inserted in the wrong place to ostensibly mend his broken bone. In 2019, he was moved to Australia under the medevac laws.

It took more than four years for him to be given an operation to remove the

wrongly inserted pins, a procedure that finally took place in Melbourne in May.

Vali's psychologist expressed concerns over the increasing decline in his mental health if he remains in detention.

In a letter sent to the minister for home affairs, Karen Andrews, and the minister for immigration, Alex Hawke, the refugees said they did "not expect or want to live in Australia, but we do want our freedom".

Read More:

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/jul/07/refugee-hunger-strike-at-melbourne-detention-centre-ends-after-17-days-with-detainees-in-hospital>

As long as you feel
pain, you're still alive. As long
as you make mistakes,
you're still human. And as long
as you keep trying, there's
still hope.

-Susan Gale





Mohammedali Nurhusein, his wife and five children were granted humanitarian visas last year but remain stranded in Sudan.

(Supplied)

Humanitarian visa holders locked out of Australia indefinitely due to COVID-19 restrictions

Lydia Feng, www.abc.net.au, 12th July 2021

Abdurezak Nurhussien has been waiting to be reunited with his brother for nearly two decades.

The last time the Melbourne father-of-five saw his older sibling Mohammedali was in their home country of Eritrea in 2003.

He had hoped that would change when his brother's family were granted humanitarian visas in March last year.

"He was so happy at the time," Mr Nurhussien, 46, told the ABC.

"He thought he would be coming [to Australia] maybe in three or four months."

But more than a year later, the brothers are still waiting.

After fleeing political persecution, Mohammedali, his wife and five young children remain stranded in the town of Kassala in eastern Sudan where they have lived in a one-bedroom home for three years.

The family is one of 8,000 refugees with offshore humanitarian visas, currently

locked out of Australia due to the federal government's border restrictions.

Unlike Australian citizens and permanent residents, humanitarian visa holders can be effectively blocked from entering the country under the travel ban.

That's because they're not yet permanent residents — they must enter the country first.

With no chance of resettlement, Mohammedali said his family is struggling to survive.

"There is no safety for my children. Also I cannot take them to school. Not enough food so I am afraid for my children because of the ethnic war," he said via video chat.

On top of that, he fears for the health of his seven-year-old son, who has type 1 diabetes.

"Sometimes he can't find the insulin. We go to the hospital and they have no medicines."

Mr Nurhussien has applied for a travel exemption on behalf of his brother three times but all were rejected with no explanation.

"If you give someone a humanitarian visa, you should look after him."

Before the pandemic, thousands of refugees arrived in Australia every year to start new lives after fleeing war or persecution.

But since border restrictions took effect in March last year, just 708 refugees have been allowed to enter Australia, according to the Australian Border Force.

That's only 1 per cent of the 53,143 people granted travel exemptions overall, as at June 30 this year.

Read More:

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-07-11/covid-border-restrictions-strands-humanitarian-visa-holders/100283502?fbclid=IwAR0YFu7I5x3WIJZsRk_tPLgguqRBEy5LU2KVNFPj0MeB83tHo2JJD5n_Nwc



Mr Mosby says food sources on Masig are depleting. Source: Abbie O'Brien

In a critical year for climate justice, these Torres Strait Islanders are leading the fight

Almost three decades since the historic Mabo decision was handed down, a new generation of Torres Strait Islanders are charting unprecedented legal territory in a bid to preserve their right to culture and the land. The group are waging a first-of-its-kind legal battle to force the Australian government to act on climate change.

Abbie O'Brien, SBS News, 4th July 2021

Yessie Mosby says the pace at which his home is disappearing is terrifying.

"It's moving very fast," the Kulkalgal man tells SBS News.

"Within four years we've seen eight metres get taken away. It is very scary, very scary to see."

The father of six is standing on a vast sand flat on Masig Island. The marshy, barren area, he says, was once the heartbeat of village life.

"It was full of palm trees. People's houses were here before they moved inland. It used to have roads. People used to come, where we are standing, and all day long and sit [under] the big almond tree, making maps, telling stories."

"There was no beach here. The beach was like 50 metres that way."

Here on Masig, and across the Torres Strait Islands, the issue of climate change is one of survival.

The region, off the northern tip of Queensland, is home to a chain of low-lying islands, 18 of which are inhabited by First Nations Australians whose culture is tethered to the land.

Masig is approximately 2.7 kilometres long and only 0.8 kilometres wide. It is home to an estimated 250 people.

Data shows that sea levels in the strait are rising at a rate double the global average. According to the Climate Council, the shallowness of this stretch of ocean exacerbates storm surges, and when they coincide with high tides, extreme sea levels result.

Read More:

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/in-a-critical-year-for-climate-justice-these-torres-strait-islanders-are-leading-the-fight/bc4ec81b-d070-473c-b982-c4ad42e3ea8f>

Australia was ranked

DEAD LAST

for climate action in
the latest UN report.

We must do better.

 CLIMATECOUNCIL.ORG.AU | crowd-funded science information



Climate Council Facebook Post 8th July

Australia has won the wooden spoon, ranking last *in the entire world* for climate action in the latest Sustainable Development Report, which assesses the progress of countries towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

It's not hard to see why: there can be no new fossil fuel projects if we are to meet globally agreed temperature goals, but our Federal Government continues to spend money on these dirty and dangerous projects. Australia is effectively standing still while the rest of the world races towards net zero.



The environment minister Sussan Ley is to appeal a court ruling that she had a duty of care to protect Australia's children from climate change harm caused by a coalmine expansion. Photograph: David Gray/Reuters

Australian government to appeal ruling that it must protect children from climate harm

Environment minister to challenge federal court judgment in a case against a NSW coalmine expansion brought by schoolchildren and nun

Graham Readfearn, The Guardian, 9th July 2021

The environment minister, Sussan Ley, will appeal yesterday's federal court declaration she has a duty of care to protect Australian children from climate harm that would be caused by the expansion of a coalmining project.

Some of the eight schoolchildren that brought the case to the federal court have reacted with dismay to the appeal, with one saying the government was now fighting for the right to cause them harm.

The historic judgment by Justice Mordecai Bromberg placed into law the minister's responsibility after a case against the Vickery coalmine expansion was brought by the eight schoolchildren and a nun.

The children had tried to force an injunction, stopping Ley from approving the expansion plans for Whitehaven Coal's project near Boggabri, New South Wales. The minister has still to make a decision on the plans.

In the declaration, Bromberg said when the minister makes her decision over the coalmine, she has a duty “to take reasonable care” to “avoid causing personal injury or death” to Australian residents under 18 “arising from emissions of carbon dioxide into the Earth’s atmosphere”.

In a statement on Friday, the minister’s office said: “After carefully considering the judgment, the minister has formed the view there are grounds on which to appeal.

“Following the handing down of orders by the court yesterday, the minister has now instructed the department to lodge a notice of appeal.”

The case came in two parts.

Melbourne student Anjali Sharma, 17, who was one of the schoolchildren in the case, said she “found it funny and honestly pretty embarrassing” that the government was appealing.

She said: “Her job should be to act for, not against, the young people of Australia.

“But instead of doing her job of safeguarding our future, she is prepared to spend public money fighting for her right to make climate change worse, harm the environment and risk the injury and death of Australian children.

A request to block the mine expansion was denied by the court in May, but the claim the minister had a duty of care to protect Australians under 18 from harm caused by greenhouse gas emissions from the mine was formalised yesterday.

Read More:

https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jul/09/australian-government-to-appeal-ruling-that-it-must-protect-children-from-climate-harm?utm_term=8bfa132df388f6ddd2eb87cebb9720a4&utm_campaign=GuardianTodayAUS&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=GTAU_email



Photo Credit- Unsplash

Peace and global citizenship: student's present concerns and future hopes

Stuart Rees, Pearls & Irritations, 13th July 2021

Zoom conversations with students from Brazil, Japan, Malaysia, France, India, Bangladesh and Ghana, reveal dismay about universal cruelties but also their hopes to experience peaceful futures.

Staged by the School of International Peace Studies (SIPS) at Soka University in Japan, and in response to the inspiring leadership of Professor Olivier Urbain, I fielded students' questions about a better future, watched snapshots of their national identity, was inspired by humanity evident in their gratitude for our conversation. They were enthusiastic, warm and imaginative. They knew of corruption, inequalities and violence yet maintained a thirst for universal humanity.

Many were disturbed by the consequences of neoliberal economic policies and the associated idea that life is a competition. Ana Maria from Brazil explained, "In workplaces, employees put huge pressures on themselves. They feel obliged to work all hours and manage without sleep. To comply with demands for efficiency, they jeopardise their health and personal relations. My question

is, in these corporate environments, how to break the cycle of self-inflicted harm?”

Kaveri from India referred to “free market policies which exploit children and result in cruelty to animals.” She saw trade in arms resulting “even in threats to use nuclear weapons”, a reference to the destructive effects of commercial gain which was repeated by Samuel from Ghana but speaking from South Korea. He wondered why the mass sale of guns in the US, “is based on commercial interests indifferent to the safety of citizens?”

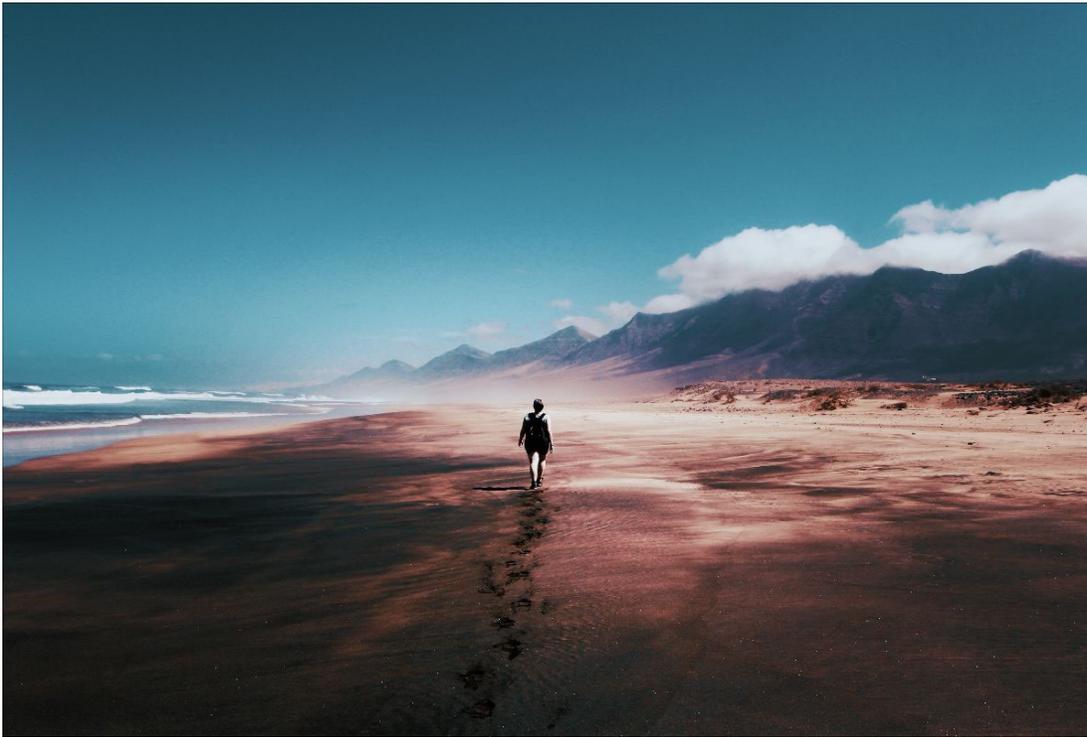
These students insisted that assumptions about the benefits of neoliberal economics had destructive effects on education. Juliana from Brazil explained, “The neoliberal paradigm makes it difficult to introduce humanitarian ideals of inclusiveness and global citizenship. In the Japanese school where I’m teaching, having autistic children in the class is discouraged. They are seen as hindering the progress of so-called normal children.”

Questions were peppered with reference to violence in every country and culture. Jasmine from India recalled an almost taken-for-granted cruelty to women and to animals. Hari from Brazil explained her observations about “destructive practice in business management.” Tulika from India commented, “I’ve been working with youth for twenty years but nationalist governments (a reference to Modi’s India) allow cruel discrimination against minorities.” She asked, “Why are powerful people even allowed to deny that this violence is happening?”

Read More:

<https://johnmenadue.com/peace-and-global-citizenship-students-present-concerns-and-future-hopes/>

REFLECTIONS



***"As I walk with Beauty
As I walk, as I walk,
The universe is walking with me,
In beauty it walks before me,
In beauty it walks behind me,
In beauty it walks below me,
In beauty it walks above me,
Beauty is on every side."***

—Traditional Navajo Prayer

Earth Teach Me

*Earth teach me stillness
as the grasses are stilled with light.
Earth teach me suffering
as old stones suffer with memory
Earth teach me humility
as blossoms are humble with beginning.
Earth teach me caring
as the mother who secures her young.
**Earth teach me courage
as the tree which stands all alone.**
Earth teach me limitation
as the ant which crawls on the ground.*

*Earth teach me freedom
as the eagle which soars in the sky.
Earth teach me resignation
as the leaves which die in the fall.
Earth teach me regeneration
as the seed which rises in the spring.
Earth teach me to forget myself
as melted snow forgets its life.
Earth teach me to remember kindness
as dry fields weep with rain.*

Ute Prayer

Source: *God Speaks in Many Tongues: Meditate with Joan Chittister on 40 Sacred Texts* p.22

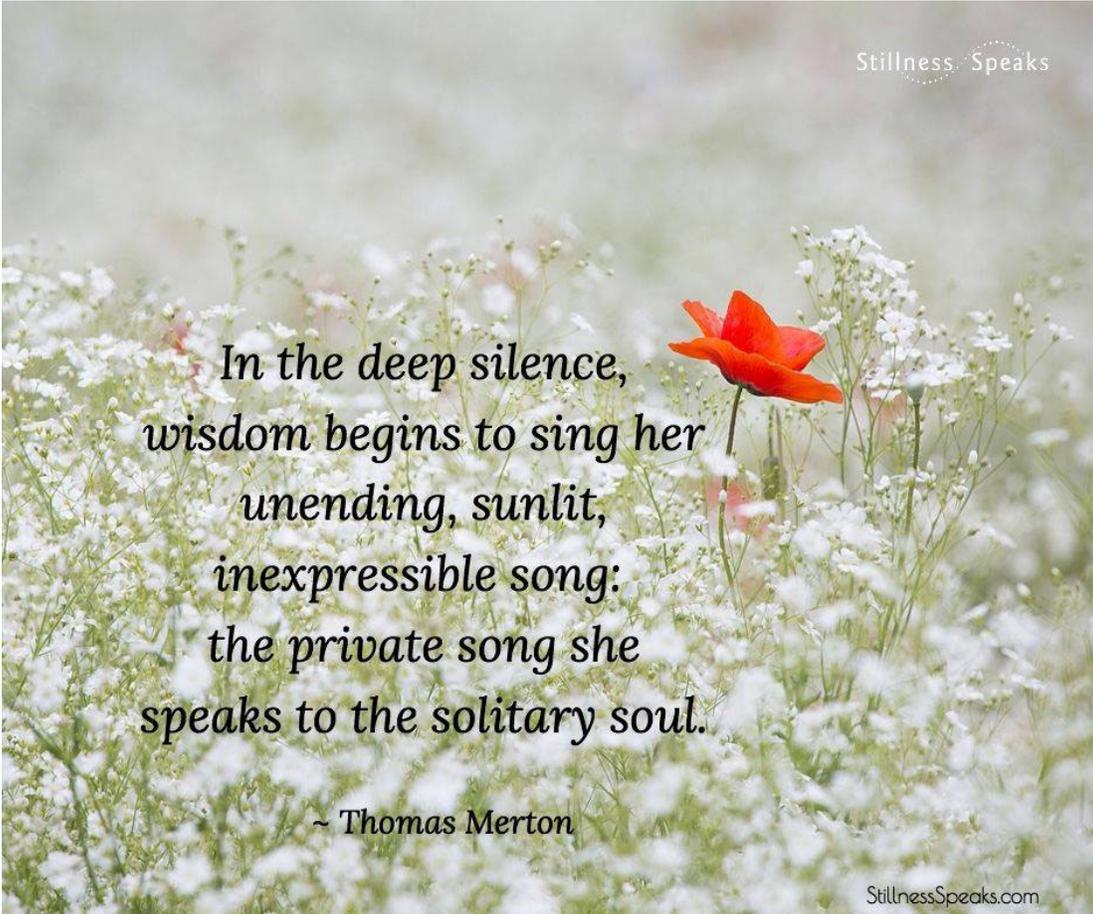
Joan Chittister invites us to choose a line from the Prayer and ponder your own reflection. The following is her own reflection:

***The courage
to be alone in life
is one of God's greatest blessings.***

***Then no words
can harm us,
no pain can deter us,
no resistance can discourage us,
no loneliness can destroy us.***

***Then we learn to live
in the memories of love
and the hope of tomorrow.***

And that is enough.



*In the deep silence,
wisdom begins to sing her
unending, sunlit,
inexpressible song:
the private song she
speaks to the solitary soul.*

~ Thomas Merton

We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples of Australia as the traditional owners and custodians of the land. We commit ourselves to actively work alongside them for reconciliation and justice. We pay our respects to the Elders; past, present and future. As we take our next step we remember the first footsteps taken on this sacred land.

The Edmund Rice Centre wholeheartedly supports and endorses the
ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART
and urges all Australians to get behind this wonderful statement.

Our mailing address is:

|HTML:LIST_ADDRESS_HTML| *|END:IF|*