



June 2021

Dear AMUA members

Its June already and here we are nearly halfway through another eventful year traveling with God and dealing with COVID 19. We praise God for the availability of vaccine and the low numbers of positive cases in this country. However, as members of the worldwide Mother Union, we need to continue to pray for our sisters in other countries who experience high death rates, little or no vaccine and increased HIV among babies whose mothers cannot access their antiretroviral medication because of lockdowns.

I hope you have all taken up the opportunity to be vaccinated to enable not only yourself to be protected from grievous illness, but contribute to the wider safety of the community. For those of you who are still hesitant, please don't listen to the media hype and political wrangling, instead listen to your doctor and medical science. High rates of vaccination will reduce the need for restrictions and open borders.

Out and About

Last month I was invited to speak about ONO in the Diocese of Rockhampton. Members gathered in Rockhampton one evening and the next day at Keppel Coast. It was great to have Virginia Grice (new bishop's wife, previously from NW Australia) in attendance as she contributed her valuable perspective on the Lay Workers Conference. Northern outreach funds support this important conference held every second year.

Coming of the Light

This year is very significant for our Torres Strait sisters and brothers. Worship and celebrations on the 1st July will commemorate the 150th anniversary of the word of God coming to the Torres Strait.

An article in the museum on Horn Island suggests that before Europeans came to the Torres Strait, Torres Strait Islanders were warlike, living from what they could glean from the water and raiding each other's islands across the Strait and Papua New Guinea in order to survive. Thus, anyone coming to the islands especially a white skinned person risked their life. However, on 1st July 1871, when members of the London Missionary Society led by the Reverend Samuel MacFarlane, anchored at Erub Island (also known as Darnley Island) in the Torres Strait, things changed. That day a warrior by the name of King Kebisu, broke cultural tradition and welcomed the missionaries. He persuaded the people of Erub to accept the power and wisdom of the teaching of this God and to put aside their warrior ways (V. Seekee). The light of Christ as found in the gospel came to the Torres Strait that day.

I encourage you all to mark the Coming of the Light this year. Here are a few suggestions:

- As part of your midday prayers, you may like to include the special prayer for the Coming of the Light found in ABPA (p. 631).

Almighty God, you have given to the people of the Islands of the Torres Strait the glorious light of the gospel of Christ: mercifully grant that we may always walk in the light of his love, and give us the strength and unifying power of your Holy Spirit to spread that light and enlarge your kingdom in the hearts of all people. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

- You may also like to reflect on the one or all of the following bible readings set for this day, keeping your Torres Strait AMUA sisters in mind.
Isaiah 58:8-11; 2 Corinthians 4:5-6; John 12:35-47
- A liturgy for a Holy Communion service has been developed in conjunction with the Torres Strait people (see attachment to this email). This liturgy may be used at an AMUA meeting close to the 1st July. (Your parish may have already scheduled this service). Please use this service as an opportunity to encourage others to join you in worship.



Erub Island cross decorated with palm ready for Coming of the Light celebrations in 2016

As you continue to walk with our Lord in hope and confidence through 2021 please keep the AMUA members and people of the far north of Australia and our MU sisters overseas, in your prayers.

In your diocesan or branch planning, please keep in mind that I am available to zoom into your meeting or where practical, visit in person to share more about ONO with you.

God bless you all

Robin Ray

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