

WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

3RD SUNDAY OF LENT



Exodus 3:1-8, 13-15 | 1 Cor 10:1-6, 10-12 | Luke 13:1-9

Sometimes you hear Indigenous people refer to Jesus as a 'person of Country'. What might this mean? It is hard to imagine the Gospels without the connection of Jesus to the sea, the river, the desert, the fields and the mountain. His teaching often featured seeds and birds and sheep and corn. In today's Gospel, we hear the parable of the fig tree. The impatient person wants to cut it down. A wiser person is prepared to work with nature by putting manure on the tree and looking after it. This is a story of growth. God is creative. God is patient with us. God gives us another chance.

We have so much to learn from the depth and resilience of Australian Indigenous culture and spirituality, both of which are intimately linked to Country. This week, Project Compassion features the story of Janice, a Wagilak woman from the Northern Territory. Janice, who lives in a remote community, is part of the Djilpin Arts Aboriginal Corporation, supported by Caritas Australia. Janice is among those overcoming many obstacles to keeping their culture strong. She does this through dance. She honours the generations who have come before her and taught their community how to respect the land and live in harmony with it. Our response to Project Compassion is providing practical support for the blossoming of Indigenous culture for all future generations.

In today's reading, Moses is in the wilderness, a place of surprising possibilities. Like the Australian landscape, the wilderness in scripture is subtle; it is a place of encounter with God. Moses thinks he is having a regular day in the family business, looking after his father-in-law's sheep. But a voice comes from a bush that is blazing without being burnt up. The voice tells Moses to take off his shoes because 'the place on which you stand is holy ground.' This is the beginning of the freedom story of his people, the start of their journey out of captivity.

May our journey to the freedom God wants for us also begin with the realisation that we too are standing on Holy Ground. God calls us all to be people of Country.