

This weekend we celebrate Mission Sunday. The theme for this year is "Love your neighbour as yourself" and its focus is on assisting our Catholic Aboriginal sisters and brothers – especially those in remote areas of Australia. So much attention has been given to the plight of refugees – and rightly so – but this should not distract us from the impoverished state in which many indigenous communities suffer. As we know, the general health of Aboriginals is well below that of non Aboriginal Australians.

This Mission Appeal that will be held next week will assist the various Catholic agencies and dioceses working among Aboriginal communities. There are priests, religious and lay working in Aboriginal communities who need our help. One such minister, Sister Alma Cabassi, a Josephite Sister, works in the vast diocese of Broome: "Using the vehicle provided by Catholic Mission, Sister Alma drives for hours on end over unforgiving terrain where there are no homes in sight and no mobile phone signal, so that she can provide essential outreach to remote communities. The roads are hard on vehicles and Sister Alma's safety relies on her having a good vehicle." This little example sheds light in a very practical way of the need for financial assistance to carry on this important ministry.

Perhaps the most important need is spiritual. This is closely connected to culture as Pope Francis' message for this year's World Mission Sunday addresses: "The Church's mission is faced by the challenge of meeting the needs of all people to return to their roots and to protect the values of their respective cultures. This means knowing and respecting other traditions and the philosophical systems, and realizing that all peoples and cultures have the right to be helped from within their own traditions to enter into the mystery of God's wisdom and to accept the Gospel of Jesus, who is light and transforming strength for all cultures."

*Peace & Blessings*

*Gerard*