

## **CELEBRATIONS-behind the reality!**

A few months after I was ordained a priest there was a massive national celebration to mark the bicentenary of white settlement in Australia. On this day at Mass I said these words; *"We need to keep in mind that today's celebration is not good news for all people, especially our aboriginal Australians."* Immediately after the Mass a man came up to me and angrily said to me; *"Why did you have to mention them?"* he left me absolutely speechless!

The English word *celebration* comes from the Latin word *celebrae* and it refers to when people gather together to honor others. The sharp reality of life is that some of our communal, national and international celebrations definitely do not gather and honor the needs of all people. I also found out this reality when on one Mother's Day I invited all of the mothers gathered in the church to stand for a blessing. After the Mass a lovely lady came up to me with tears in her eyes and said to me; *"What you did really hurt me as I suffer from infertility and would dearly love to have a child."* I was again left speechless!

Saint Paul of Tarsus perhaps strikes the right balance of inclusivity when he wrote these wonderful words; *"That there is neither Jew nor Greek, nor slave nor free person, neither male or female we are all one in Christ Jesus."* (Galatians Chapter 3 verse 28). *Fr Martin R Maunsell*