

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER IN SOLIDARITY WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES – 2020

Healing of the Earth

We the Body of Christ, are called to live in solidarity with all peoples. We are called to respect, protect, defend and nurture the oneness of all of God's Creation. God made this Earth as a true gift to His children of all nations.

Indigenous people around our world have their creation stories. These stories are about relationships. They teach us about the Earth and it's awakening. God the Creator makes the Earth a good place. He sees a beautiful place with purpose. We acknowledge God as the Creator of all things!

There is also the relationship with all things of the Earth and universe. This is our common home: the moon and stars, the sun, the wind and water, and the land. As people of the Earth we share with one another, each and every day. God gathers us together in this place.

Another relationship is about *healing*. We are always healing. God sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to lead us in the way of healing and restore relationship with God, other peoples, and all creation. Jesus used mud from the Earth to heal the blind. He went into the wilderness and to the mountains to fast. He used bread and a few fish to feed thousands of people. He worked with the wind and water. Jesus was in full relationship with all things of creation. We learn from Him about the way of the healer, friend, prophet, and teacher.

Furthermore, we are in loving relationship with all the Children of God. We are all created in His image and likeness. The human community has many blessings: families and kinship; languages; ceremonies and rituals. These gifts connect us.

In an article written by Father Rigobert Minani Bihuzo, S.J., for the Synod of the Amazon, the Church is called to strengthen its teaching about the Earth as a gift from God¹. This gift continues to be given, and God's faithful people are called not only to be good stewards of the land, but are to also bring healing and teachings about good versus poor stewardship of our common home.

Ecological conversion, as taught by Pope Francis, requires the promotion and respect of human rights – individual and collective. People of faith are to advocate for peoples whose way of life depends on the land, and are to defend the rights of persons who are victims of exploitation. This was acknowledged in the process and findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its Calls to Action, here in Canada.

¹ <https://justresponse.faith/week-4-easter-time-ecological-conversion>

Together we share one common home, Mother Earth, and we are all dependant on her for our existence. We continue to face very real threats to our ecology and way of life, which has never been more apparent as we live through the present Covid-19 pandemic. We must come together as one human family. Pope Francis reminds us in his encyclical *Laudato Si* that: “Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home.”² We turn to the Earth for sustenance: for shelter, food and medicines. And when we die, our bodies will return to the Earth where our ancestors reside as we await to be with God in Heaven forever.

We recognize the benevolence of the Creator, who has provided us with the gifts of Earth, water, fire and air. We are grateful for all He has provided. We express our gratitude through our lives of prayer, song, dance, story, ceremony and ritual.

Let us pray:

O God, Great Spirit and Faithful Creator, with humility we your children acknowledge the relationship of all living things.

For this we thank you, we praise you and we worship you.

We call on you, Great Mystery, the Word made Flesh – our teacher, prophet and brother - to open our hearts to all our brothers and sisters, and with them to grow in the wisdom, honesty, courage and respectfulness shown in The Sacred Teachings. Give us the honesty to recognize that the Earth provides us with life sustaining breath, nourishment and healing, and give us the strength to proclaim by our words and actions that the Earth is a blessing for all peoples. May we avoid the sins of exploitive personal power and profit. May we seek the righteous way of love, service, and healing in all things.

Father, as we walk our journey on this Earth, may your life-giving Spirit protect and guide us with your Wisdom so that we might live in right relationship and harmony with all humanity. May we pass on to future generations this Earth and all your gifts as you have provided them to us. +Amen

² http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html