

Corpus Christi Parish
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Dear Parishioners; This weekend we will be celebrating the Feast of Corpus Christi, the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, the feast of our home parish. Naming a Catholic Church is an important decision. Whether you honor a person of God, like the Holy Spirit, or a patron Saint, like St. Theresa of Lisieux, naming the parish is going to have a significant effect on the community of believers.

Which is why we have worked to incorporate the Holy Spirit and St. Theresa in the new community of Corpus Christi in the two stained glass windows. They represent the history and heritage of the former communities that make up the new community, but more importantly, we did not want to lose their patronage and the influence that meditating on the spirituality of St. Theresa and the guidance of the Holy Spirit provide to those who have the courage to seek, to ask and to knock.

Which is also why so much thought has gone into what we emphasize with the new name of Corpus Christi, The Body of Christ. You see, it is too easy to just fall into the one dimensional trap of celebrating Jesus in the Eucharist. We want to do that of course, for the mass is the greatest prayer that we have and meeting Jesus in the Blessed Bread and the Blessed Wine is the surest way for us to find our belonging and our grace. But we are also told that together we make up the one Corpus Christi, the one Body of Christ.

Jesus wants us to have an intimate encounter with Him in the Eucharist, our Amen to all of what God has in store for us in the week ahead. He wanted us to have a tangible reminder of His faithfulness and His friendship and He wanted us to see Him as nourishment for the journey. And, he expects us to challenge ourselves to live that journey as people of grace with all those who cross our path.

I am sure that we have all heard about the two hundred and fifteen children who died while attending the Residential School overseen by the Catholic Church in Kamloops and who were buried in unmarked graves. And today, the government has issued its report and recommendations on the National Inquiry of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

I read a report on the tragedy of the Residential Schools and in it they said; *“The culture of denial was so pervasive for so long that most Canadians knew nothing about the existence of residential schools and what went on there, and that lack of awareness continues today. This denial made it easy to blame the victims for the inevitable consequences of cultural breakdown, family dysfunction, poverty, addiction, and incarceration.”*

I recognize myself in this observation. I am guilty of seeing the affects of the government and our churches attempts to, as Duncan Campbell Scott the architect of the Indian residential school system wrote back in 1920; “...to kill the Indian in the child” and then assume that our First Nations sisters and brothers’ subsequent struggles were of their own making. And I was wrong. You cannot possibly nail so many people and communities to the cross for so many years, and be surprised at the depth of their pain and hurting and the affect that pain has on their daily living.

Now, there may not be any Catholics who are reading this letter who are responsible for what is being called a residential school genocide. But this generation of Catholics have an absolute responsibility to this generation and their crosses, and we must not fail them now that we know. And there is a relief in discovering that there is a way to help, and that there is a path forward and towards healing that we can help to create and nurture. And maybe this time we will learn to listen and to trust what we are hearing, so that we are a source of grace for all victims and those suffering the cross of any kind. For more is expected from those who dare to say that we represent Jesus Christ.

I found the following prayer for truth and reconciliation and a common path forward: *Jesus—gentle Saviour, Good Shepherd, Divine Healer, Great Lover of all peoples: we offer you our sorrow for the wrongs committed against our First Nations’ children in Canada’s Indian Residential Schools. We offer you our desire to walk with our First Nations brothers and sisters; to journey with them on the path of truth, healing and reconciliation, as we share this earthly pilgrimage to our heavenly homeland, where every tear will be wiped away and every sorrow will be turned to joy. Give us one heart and one mind to walk forward together along this path in the love and strength of your Spirit, In truth, reconciliation and peace. We make this prayer in the power of your Most Holy Name. Amen*

May God be gracious to us and bless us, now and forever. Pat Monette/Pastor