

Bulletin Notices on Theme of Reconciliation

June 27, 2021

MESSAGE FROM THE SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE The Social & Eco Justice Committee shares the feelings of sorrow and guilt all parishioners have experienced these past few weeks, following the discovery of the remains of Indigenous children buried in unmarked graves at the Kamloops Indian Residential School. We see this event as an urgent reminder of the work all Canadian Catholics need to do. In the coming weeks and months, we will be rolling out a series of suggestions for learning opportunities and individual and collective actions –to help us journey towards reconciliation and healing, alongside our Indigenous brothers and sisters. We also invite you to read our 2020-2021 Annual Report, posted here.

July 4, 2021

Watch this powerful [15-minute TED talk](#) by Ginger Gosnell-Myers, on why we need Reconciliation in Canada, and what we can learn from countries who have had the courage and political will to address historical wrongs.

July 11, 2021

Why are Canadians now doing land (or territory) acknowledgements at the beginning of every public event? How can we learn to make them truly meaningful? Watch these two complementary short videos to find out. Click [here](#) and [here](#).

July 18, 2021

The CBC has asked David A. Robertson (a Cree author based in Winnipeg) to curate a list of [48 books for readers of all ages](#), to help us understand the residential school experience. Buy these books for yourself, and for family and friends. Books you've read can then be donated to the circulating book exchange, which will be set up at Holy Cross. More on this in a later bulletin.

July 25, 2021

In this 7-minute [video](#) shot in Goldstream Park, our W̱SÁNEĆ neighbor, MENEŁOT, speaks of the importance of teaching **environmental stewardship** to the younger generations. To learn more about Indigenous peoples' traditional respect for their lands, read the international bestseller ***Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*** by environmental biologist Robin Wall Kimmerer. No time to read the book? Watch this 3 ½-minute [video](#) to understand the concept of "**The Honorable Harvest.**"

Aug. 1, 2021

To **further our knowledge of Indigenous history, cultures and experience**, we are starting **a special collection of books by Indigenous authors or on Indigenous issues** for our parish library. This will become a **free circulating exchange**, placed in our church foyer for greater access. If you have appropriate **books to DONATE TO THIS COLLECTION**, please **drop them off at the Parish Office or leave them on the bookcase in the foyer for our librarian George**

Murphy. Fiction and non-fiction, and books for all age groups are welcome. Once we have collected a sufficient number, we will start the circulation.

Aug. 8, 2021

Reminder: if you have **books to donate to the special collection of books by Indigenous authors or on Indigenous issues**, please drop them off at the Parish Office or leave them on the bookcase in the foyer for our librarian George Murphy. Fiction and non-fiction, and books for all age groups are welcome.

Reconciliation action for this week: watch the documentary “[Picking up the Pieces: the Making of the Witness Blanket.](#)” Coast Salish artist and UVic Professor Carey Newman created this monumental art installation from items collected from residential schools, government buildings and churches across Canada, to commemorate the victims of residential schools.

Aug. 15, 2021

What does TRUE RECONCILIATION look like? We have much to learn from the late **FR. JEAN POCHAT**, OMI, who was tasked with reconciliation following revelations about the residential schools in the Mackenzie Diocese (Northwest Territories). [Read](#) about his relationship with the Tłı̨chǫ people of the Dene Nation, whom he served for 60 years. Watch the CBC coverage of the [celebration of his 82nd birthday](#), and of his [funeral](#) in 2010.

We are continuing to accept **book donations towards our special Indigenous Collection**. See the description in our [Aug. 1 bulletin](#).

Aug. 22, 2021

We now have a small **collection of books by Indigenous authors and on Indigenous issues**, and parishioners will be able to **borrow them starting this weekend** (in the church foyer). Please take only one book per person at a time; sign it out using the check-out notebook; and return it promptly after reading. We continue to accept donations of books towards the collection. Please place them on top of the bookcase in the foyer, or leave them at the parish office.

Aug. 29, 2021

The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission refers many times to the **Doctrine of Discovery**, calling for its rejection. What is this Doctrine and why was it responsible for so much harm done to Indigenous peoples around the world throughout the centuries? To find out more, watch “[Doctrine of Discovery: Stolen Lands, Strong Hearts](#),” a powerful 66-minute film (2019) made by the Anglican Church of Canada, in the spirit of Reconciliation.

Sept. 5, 2021

Over the past nine weeks, you’ve been invited to watch TED talks and videos, and read books on Indigenous issues. For a more comprehensive overview of Indigenous history, cultures and contemporary issues in Canada, **take “Indigenous Canada,” a free open on-line course offered by the University of Alberta**. The 12 modules that make up this course can be completed at your own pace. [Register for the course here](#). September is a great time to go back to school!

Sept. 12, 2021

For the past nine weeks, we have suggested a variety of learning opportunities (watching a TED talk, a short video, a documentary film; reading a news article or a book; enrolling in a course), to help us on our journey towards Reconciliation with our Indigenous brothers and sisters. You can **revisit all of these suggestions** by going to the [webpage of the Social & Eco Justice Committee](#), and clicking on the “Reconciliation Corner” link. (While you’re there, you may also be interested in revisiting the “Green Tips” we’ve brought you in the past.)

Sept. 19, 2021

[This article](#), published in the *Capital Daily* (July 6, 2021), speaks to **the importance of teaching Indigenous language and culture to Indigenous (and non-Indigenous) students in Vancouver Island schools**. Reconnection to their culture is a crucial part of healing for children and youth in government care who have been removed from their families and communities. Currently, 67% of children and youth in foster care in B. C. are Indigenous. For many, the foster care system is tantamount to a continuation of the residential school system.

Sept. 26, 2021

Thursday Sept. 30 is the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation. Please take the time to watch this powerful 1989 film “[Where the Spirit Moves](#).” Set in 1937 in Western Canada, it tells the story of a young Blackfoot girl taken from her home and sent to an Indian residential school run by Anglicans. It fully illustrates the inhumanity of a system that seeks to forcibly erase the cultural identity of Indigenous children.

Attend mass that day wearing an orange shirt. View this 2-minute video of Phyllis Webstad explaining the [origins of Orange Shirt Day](#). Orange shirts can be purchased at the UVic Bookstore and at [these outlets](#).

Oct. 3, 2021

11-year-old [Adelyn Sophie Newman-Ting](#) from Victoria has won an international competition organized by UNESCO, of stories about language preservation written by Indigenous children. Adelyn is the daughter of renowned Kwakwaka’wakw and Coast Salish artist and UVic Professor Carey Newman, creator of the monumental Witness Blanket at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. Her book, *Finding the Language*, is about two friends searching for terms in the Kwak’wala language, which was forcibly suppressed in residential schools. Be sure to listen to the CBC’s interview with Adelyn and her proud father (at the bottom of the webpage). We will be adding Adelyn’s book to our Indigenous collection.

Oct. 10, 2021

This Thanksgiving, read the traditional [Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address](#). Let us truly give thanks for all we receive from Mother Earth and the Creator, and let us focus on peace and unity as we repeat the beautiful refrain: “Now our minds are one.” To learn more about the purpose and uses of this Thanksgiving Address, which has been translated into over 40 languages, watch this 4-minute [video](#). Robin Wall Kimmerer has a chapter devoted to this “invocation of gratitude” (p. 108) in her best-selling book *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous*

Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants. We have this book in our circulating Indigenous Collection.

October 17, 2021

In this age when climate change (droughts, forest fires, floods, heat waves) poses a real threat to our food security, scientists are turning to the **traditional agricultural knowledge of Indigenous peoples** for solutions. Swewépepemc land and seed steward Tiffany Traverse partners with local food growers in the Peace River region and students in the UBC Faculty of Land and Food Systems to identify more resilient and adaptable food sources in the face of a warming planet. Read this *Globe and Mail* [article](#) on “**How Indigenous-led agriculture in B.C.’s Peace River region is a beacon of hope amid an uncertain future.**”

October 24, 2021

How do you talk to your children or grandchildren about the history of residential schools? In this [9-minute video](#), **Monique Gray Smith** (a Cree author based in Victoria) offers some ideas, one of which is to read to them. She suggests authors and titles for readers of all ages. We have in our Indigenous Collection some of the authors mentioned (eg. Thomas King, Richard Wagamese, Carey Newman, Michelle Good), but there are so many more who deserve our attention. See also the list of [48 books for readers of all ages](#), curated by **David A. Robertson** (a Cree author based in Winnipeg), to help us understand the residential school experience.

October 31, 2021

Watch this [47-minute documentary](#) on **Olive Dickason**, the **first scholar to write the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada**. Of Métis heritage, Dr. Dickason worked first as a journalist, then with the National Gallery of Canada, before becoming a Professor of History at the University of Alberta. Her ground-breaking book, *Canada’s First Nations* (1992), gave an overview of Canadian Indigenous societies. She received the Order of Canada in 1996, and the National Aboriginal Achievement Award in 1997. This film, produced in 2002, is an illuminating documentary on a researcher who redefined how Canadian history is done. (Note that Dr. Dickason uses the term “Indians” in the film, a term replaced now by “First Nations people.”)

November 7, 2021

SENĆOŦEN is the language universally spoken by the W̱SÁNEĆ people in what is now Saanich, before Indigenous children were forbidden from speaking their native languages in the residential schools, and punished for doing so. Thanks to the efforts of Elders and many committed community members, including teachers and youth, the number of Indigenous language learners has been on the rise over the past decade. Read about the revitalization of SENĆOŦEN [in this article](#): an alphabet, a dedicated school, university programs, online resources, special keyboard characters, generations of speakers and teachers, and more.

November 14 and 21, 2021

In an earlier notice (August 8), you were invited to watch the documentary “[Picking up the Pieces: the Making of the Witness Blanket](#).” Coast Salish artist and UVic Professor Carey Newman created this monumental art installation from items collected from residential schools, government buildings and churches across Canada, to commemorate the victims of residential schools. A book on the Witness Blanket is in our Indigenous Collection. Now you can **view a true-to-scale replica of the Witness Blanket at the Cedar Hill Recreation Centre** between Nov. 16 and Dec. 12. [Read this article](#) in the *Saanich News* to learn more about this exhibit.

Nov. 28, 2021

This is a [heartwarming story](#) from Charla Huber, one of the *Times Colonist's* weekly columnists. Read about **Premier Horgan singing “Happy Birthday” in Hul’qumi’num** to an elder of the Beecher Bay First Nation, having just learned the words. The article encourages cultural sharing and a willingness to step out of one’s comfort zone.

Dec. 5, 2021

Shortly after the discovery of 215 unmarked graves near the Kamloops Indian Residential School, the *Tyee* published an article on **Dr. Peter Henderson Bryce**, Canada’s first chief medical officer. “[The Story of a National Crime](#)” tells of Dr. Bryce’s persistent efforts, over a period of 15 years (1907-1921), to warn the Canadian Government that residential schools had become tuberculosis death camps. He was repeatedly ignored, and eventually forced to retire from federal service. Dr. Bryce deserves to be remembered as the original “whistleblower” and the **moral conscience of the nation**.

Dec. 12, 2021

If you missed the excellent **four-part Knowledge Network series** entitled “**British Columbia: An Untold Story**” (Oct. 19 to Nov. 2), you can watch it [here](#) for free. (You’ll need to create an account with the Knowledge Network.) Episode 1 recounts the relations between Indigenous peoples and settlers; episode 2 tells the story of Black settlers in B. C., the rise of the labour movement and women’s increasing participation in the work force; episode 3 relates the experiences of Chinese, Japanese, Sikhs and Americans immigrants; episode 4 focuses on resource extraction industries and the environmental movement, often led by First Nations peoples.

Dec. 19, 2021

[A recent article](#) in the *Times Colonist* offers another example of reconciliation. **St. Paul’s Indian Church** at Squamish Nation’s Eslha7an (Mission Reserve), erected in 1868 on the north shore of the Burrard Inlet, is the oldest Catholic mission church in the Lower Mainland. It is now integrating Skwxwu7mesh Sníchim (Squamish language) into its Sunday masses. Squamish Elder

and Catholic Deacon Rennie Nahanee, who is himself learning the language, “is confident that **the church can be a vessel for cultural revitalization**, and ongoing education about Squamish language and teachings.” He is looking to other cultures (both internationally and locally) – to see how they have integrated their traditional languages and cultures into Catholic celebrations.

Dec. 26, 2021

Over the past 26 weeks, you have been invited to read an article or a book, watch a video, a film or a TV series, enroll in a course, go see an exhibit . . . – all in the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation. The Reconciliation Corner will appear periodically in 2022, but not on a weekly basis. We hope that you will **revisit the past notices, posted under “Reconciliation Corner”** on the [webpage of the Social and Eco Justice Committee](#). Many of the articles deserve a second reading; and the videos and films, a second viewing.