

## Day of Truth and Reconciliation September 30, 2023



Sunrise Prayer, Diane Montreuil

### Opening Prayer

We wish to acknowledge that we are gathered across the traditional lands of many indigenous peoples. We are grateful for their care of the land through countless generations. We acknowledge with sorrow the harms and sufferings of our shared history and current reality. We are committed to listening and learning on our reconciliation journey. As First Peoples have done since time immemorial, we strive to be responsible stewards of the land, and to respect the cultures, ceremonies, and traditions of all who call it home.

**Hymn:** All One People (Dan Schutte) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fWyx0qGsRRc>

### Readings

Without truth, justice, and healing, there can be no genuine reconciliation. (Summary of Final Report of the TRC)

For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one...He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. (Eph. 2:14-16)



### Cherokee Prayer Blessing:

May the Warm Winds of Heaven  
Blow softly upon your house.  
May the Great Spirit  
Bless all who enter there.  
May your Moccasins  
Make happy tracks  
in many snows,  
and may the Rainbow.  
Always touch your shoulder

## **Additional Readings**

### **The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC)**

In 2022 Mary Simon, first Indigenous Governor General writes, “The path of reconciliation is a migration, not a destination. It is...a societal shift. It includes conversations...courageous, honest and ... essential to healing. It is about relationships we build and sustain between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians, generations and with our land and waters.

During his trip to Bolivia in 2015, Pope Francis stated that, “Like Saint John Paul II, I ask that the Church-I repeat what he said, ‘kneel before God and implore forgiveness for the past and present sins of her sons and daughters’. I would also say, and here I wish to be quite clear, as was Saint John Paul II: I humbly ask forgiveness, not only for the offenses of the Church herself, but also for crimes committed against the native peoples during the so-called conquest of America. Together with this request for forgiveness and to be just, I also would like us to remember the thousands of priests and bishops who strongly opposed the logic of the sword with the power of the Cross. There was sin, a great deal of it, for which we did not ask pardon. We ask forgiveness, I ask forgiveness. But here also, where there was sin, great sin, grace abounded through the men and women who defended the rights of Indigenous Peoples.”

The CCCB note that the TRC provides a definition of reconciliation consonant with a Christian understanding, “reconciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. For that to happen there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour”....The TRC in its Call to Action 48, asked faith groups in Canada to “formally adopt and comply with the principles, norms, and standards of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for reconciliation”.... On this journey, when we walk in solidarity on the path of seeking justice, there are steps we can take that lead to right relations and reconciliation. If we want to know if reconciliation is real, watch our feet! As a church, our feet should bring us closer to Indigenous Peoples, to concrete acts of justice that transform the word reconciliation into “reconcili-action”.

### **Repudiation of The Doctrine of Discovery**

On 30 March 2023, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (“CCCB”) stated it “is grateful that the Dicastery for Culture and Education and the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development have issued a Joint Statement addressing the concept of the “Doctrine of Discovery,” including the question of certain papal bulls of the 15th century which served as the basis for the ‘doctrine.’” The Statement repudiates any concepts that fail to recognize inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples and affirms: “In no uncertain terms, the Church’s magisterium upholds respect due to every human being. The Church therefore repudiates concepts that fail to recognize the inherent human rights of indigenous peoples, including what has become known as the legal and political ‘doctrine of discovery’.” In closing, the CCCB echoes Pope Francis’ statement from Quebec City in July 2022 that “never again can the Christian community allow itself to be infected by the idea that one culture is superior to others, or that it is legitimate to employ ways of coercing others.”