



**The Catholic Women's League of Canada  
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council**



**Provincial President**

**Judy Look**

**Communique #7**

**DATE: July 8, 2021**

TO: Diocesan Chairpersons  
CC: Provincial Executive (for information)  
CC: National Chairperson President  
FROM: Judy Look

**Three Cups of Tea  
Our Indigenous Sisters and Brothers  
Catholic Women League Members Agents for Change**

Please pour yourself a cup of tea as you read this lengthy communique on one of the most important issue in our Canadian history. Ladies we must embrace the invitation to be agents for change. Although our grateful bag is brimming over with a beautiful country, a virus being managed, churches fully operational, the freedom to practice our faith and the ability to interact with family, friends and strangers it also includes the opportunity to reflect on the dark side of our history that involves the church that we all love and to ask ourselves why this is happening **for** us. CWL has been working towards change since 2013 when the Catholic Women's League encouraged her members to develop a relationship with our indigenous brothers and sisters reflected in **Resolution 2013.01 Building Relationships and Partnerships with Canada's Indigenous Peoples**, submitted by New Brunswick Provincial Council: <https://cwl.ca/resolution-2013-01-building-relationships-and-partnerships-with-canadas-indigenous-peoples/>

With this resolution in mind and with the tragedy of the unmarked gravesites, the burning and vandalism of Christian churches, the pain of our clergy and a people who are gathering to witness to their intergenerational trauma it is clear the recommendations in the resolution are a monumental task but nonetheless one that we need to tackle. We must begin slowly and intentionally if we are to be the agents of change first of our own hearts and then our society as a whole.

Many of us have participated in different workshops and conventions that introduced "Truth and Reconciliation", but it really was only a first cup of tea and only a few of us moved to the second cup of tea that included education and knowledge. Today that first cup of tea with the addition of unmarked gravesites, burnt and vandalized churches and a sea of orange is before us again.

It is like the cup that was set before Christ in the garden of Gethsemane. He asked the Father to remove it and then said Thy will be done. It was only by His drinking of the cup that our salvation was guaranteed. We too must embrace the cups before us if there is to be reconciliation. Our second cup contains knowledge about the past for which we are not responsible, and the knowledge needed to become participants in building the future which we are responsible for. The template for us must be a listening template, one that invites the stories of our indigenous brothers and sisters through the eyes of moms and dads who had their children taken from them and through the eyes of terrified children who were thrust into the unknown. We must acknowledge the past for which we are truly sorry with no added buts or dismantling of people's stories. At this moment in time through knowledge and understanding we have the opportunity to build trust by listening, acknowledging and reaching out our hands so that together we can build a strong Canada.

As we begin this challenging journey let us use this quote as our backdrop and springboard:

**“For over 100 years, Aboriginal children were removed from their families and sent to institutions called residential schools. The government-funded, church-run schools were located across Canada and established with the purpose to eliminate parental involvement in the spiritual, cultural and intellectual development of Aboriginal children. The last residential schools closed in the mid-1990s.**

**During this chapter in Canadian history, more than 150,000 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children were forced to attend these schools, some of which were hundreds of miles from their home. The cumulative impact of residential schools is a legacy of unresolved trauma passed from generation to generation and has had a profound effect on the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians.**

**Collective efforts from all peoples are necessary to revitalize the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and Canadian society – reconciliation is the goal. It is a goal that will take the commitment of multiple generations but when it is achieved, when we have reconciliation - it will make for a better, stronger Canada.”**

<http://www.trc.ca/events-and-projects/missing-children-project.html>

To be part of this happening we must be **intentional** in our actions. Let’s first invoke the Holy Spirit’s guidance then let us place on our monthly meeting agendas, **“Truth and Reconciliation - Prayer and Education”**

This education process **should include:**

The response of the hierarchical church:

- <https://omny.fm/shows/ched-mid-morning/catholic-church-s-lack-of-commitment-to-share-resi>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9OXW395L2dU>
- <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/vancouver-archbishop-apologizes-indigenous-community-1.6051150>
- <https://www.catholicyc.ca/blog/a-message-from-bishop-mcgrattan-regarding-residential-school-grave-sites>
- <https://mfsdiocese.ca>
- <https://www.dioceseofstpaul.ca>
- <https://archgm.ca>
- <https://www.convivium.ca/articles/reality-in-truth-and-reconciliation/>
- [CCCB Statement Regarding Discovery at Former Kamloops Indian Residential School](#)

**Could include:**

- The University of Alberta offers a free online "MOOC" (massive open online course) called Indigenous Canada. It's a 12-week program that is done fully online on your own time. details at <https://www.ualberta.ca/admissions-programs/online-courses/indigenous-canada/index.html>
- 21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act: Helping Canadians Make Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples a Reality/ / by Bob Joseph-a well-structured, well-researched, yet easy read (172 pages)

- The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America / / by Thomas King  
-more colloquial, poignant, blatant, yet told with great humility AND humour
- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission  
[www.trc.ca/assets/pdf/Volume\\_1\\_History\\_Part\\_1\\_English\\_Web.pdf](http://www.trc.ca/assets/pdf/Volume_1_History_Part_1_English_Web.pdf) · PDF file
- aptn news channel to become familiar with the indigenous culture
- [150 Acts of Reconciliation for Canada's 150 - Active History](http://www.activehistory.ca)  
150 Acts of Reconciliation for Canada's 150 (originally published on [ActiveHistory.ca](http://www.activehistory.ca)) By Crystal Fraser and Sara Komarnisky Although this was in 2017 there are many very good suggestions to help us in our quest for understanding
- <http://religiouseducation.rccdsb.edu.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/26/2010/06/TR-Prayer.pdf>

Ladies this journey will not be easy. We will grapple with information, situations, and emotions that we would rather ignore. As members of the Catholic Women's League who build relationships and effect change let us face it with open hearts, the guidance of Our Lady of Good Counsel and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

Remember we are the Chosen Women of the Lord - called to make a difference.

For your reflection a poem written by our CWL sister Jasper Leung-Chau, St. Gabriel Council, Chestemere AB

**Right Isn't Always Right** June 19, 2021  
*By Jasper Leung-Chau*

Being right Isn't always right  
If to win means the need to fight.  
To enforce that another's ways are wrong  
Making people feel small, like they don't belong\_  
Unless they agree precisely with our views,  
yield to our beliefs, bias and skewed.  
Sometimes the higher path is to let go.  
With people it's often better to journey slow.  
Meet them wherever they are at,  
without insistence, judgement or a list of facts.  
With humility, an open mind to learn,  
and a respectful curiosity that's genuinely  
yearns  
to deeply connect,  
as opposed to correct.  
where our paths cross and intersect.  
At a common place called the human heart  
that beats in unison, not apart.  
A central place without pride or greed.  
Where I see you and you see me.  
Each as imperfect human beings,  
continuously trying towards a new beginning.

Let us first seek to understand  
even if an agreement is not where we initially  
land.  
The Creator made us both,  
for a mystery no one fully knows.  
What matters is that I want to be your friend,  
so please take my hand, let us not hurt again.  
When we are ready, you can lead.  
Sowing trust and a stronger form of mustard  
seed.  
Slowly sprouting new fields of wheat  
where our future generations gather, drum and  
eat.  
Sitting in circles listening to tales from the past  
and the collective pain is finally healed at last.  
We will not forget the hard and difficult lessons,  
but still find joy,  
cherishing life's beauty and simple blessings.

*Dedicated to all Peoples of Canada.  
May we all find true healing and reconciliation.*