

Bishop Gary's Pastoral Letter (Dec. 2016): "Our Majestic Lands: a Gift from God" - Part 1

"My dear Family,

The twelfth day of December is the memorial of Our Lady of Guadalupe, commemorating the appearance in 1531 of the Virgin Mary to an Indigenous Mexican, Juan Diego, who is the first Indigenous saint. In December 1531, Juan Diego was granted an apparition of Mary on four separate occasions at the Hill of Tepeyac. Mary brought to Juan Diego a message of new life and her maternal protection and care as the Mother of Jesus, giving him and all Indigenous peoples of the Americas a message of hope and loving favour from God. The words she spoke to him, "No estoy yo aqui que soy tu madre?" (*Am I not here, I who am your mother?*) are inscribed over the main entrance to the Basilica of Guadalupe. There are 53 distinct First Nations within the Diocese of Victoria, comprising 3 linguistic groups and many sub-groups - and the message of Mary to St. Juan Diego is as relevant in our Diocese in the 21st Century as it was in Mexico 485 years ago. Our history in the Diocese of Victoria is intertwined with Indigenous peoples, and with French, English, Spanish, American trading and colonial expansion. These intertwined relationships sometimes resulted in communion, and sometimes in antagonism, which had profound effects on a fundamental Divine and human teaching: *Love God and love your neighbour*. The need for respectful relations has always been great, and perhaps at this time in history is even greater with so many threats to life and our common home. In his Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis invited us to consider as paramount the needs of people, especially the vulnerable and our common home, rather than the headlong pursuit of power and money.

Because I am not indigenous to these lands, and thus have limited understanding of the complex competing histories of the Indigenous nations and the tensions of cultural contacts pre- and post-European contact, I have worked in collaboration with Qwaqumulwhut and H:umuth (Joan and Jerry Brown) of the Snuneymuxw First Nation to produce this Pastoral Letter. I offer this as an invitation to an essential dialogue that needs to take place in our own historical, cultural and geographical contexts, with our Indigenous brothers and sisters. We are invited to engage in this important conversation and work so that justice, truth and life itself may flourish as the Creator intended - whose Son gave his life to reconcile all creation to the Creator. Thus, I invite you to view the great lands of our Diocese through an ancestral lens, and to listen, not only with ears but also with hearts, to the needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ, responding with the tender mercy of our loving God. This Pastoral Letter is intended as a gentle reminder that these lands and its resources touch every aspect of our life. Indigenous people have long realized that the privilege of these great gifts comes with a great responsibility.

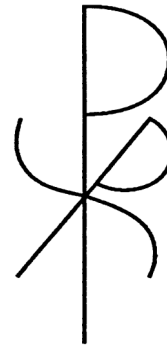
In this Pastoral Letter, I offer a prayerful reflection on this critical topic. Specifically, I will begin with a brief introduction of the way of the Ancestors of Vancouver Island. Please note that the cultural practices that I will refer to are known to be universal practices; specific cultural details of the people certainly go beyond the scope of this discussion. Finally, I will consider how a modern world has impacted the people of this area and suggest a few steps forward on the path.

Over the past 40 years, I have been fortunate to spend much time with prominent Elders from numerous Indigenous communities. During these sacred times, the Elders invited me to witness time-honoured rituals and ceremonies. They also shared many personal stories, myths, and legends. Through these cultural experiences, I became aware of the Indigenous peoples' profound relationship with their lands. It is a connectedness that provides a deep understanding of complex ecosystems, and techniques for using and managing sacred resources. Pope Francis affirms this connectedness:

"We can say that alongside revelation properly so-called, contained in sacred Scripture, there is a divine manifestation in the blaze of the sun and the fall of night. Paying attention to this manifestation, we learn to see ourselves in relation to all other creatures (Laudato Si' #85)." "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it, for He has founded it on the seas and established it on the rivers (Psalm 24:1-2)."

Also, as it has been told to me, these beautiful lands are the birthplace of many distinct languages and cultures. Without a doubt this Ancestral way of being with the land honours all living things, sky dwellers, water beings, forest creatures and all other forms of life, seen and unseen. I have learned that the Ancestors enhanced their relationship through reverence, humility, and reciprocity. It is where the Indigenous Ancestors found their peace and vitality.

It is obvious that this level of familiarity could only be acquired over thousands of years, notably, transferring and sharing this amazing land-based knowledge from one generation to the next. I have come to realize that this way of knowing is a precious gift from God. That is, a way of being with the land as God intended. Pope Francis offers further insight: *"In this sense, it is essential to show special care for indigenous communities and their cultural traditions. They are not merely one minority among others, but should be the principal dialogue partners, especially when large projects affecting their land are proposed. For them, land is not a commodity but rather a gift from God and from their ancestors who rest there, a sacred space with which they need to interact if they are to maintain their identity and values (Laudato Si' # 145)." To be continued*



Saanich Peninsula Parish

A ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITY IN COVENANT WITH ST. STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

Parish office: 10030 Third St, Sidney

Parish office: 250-656-7433

Email: spparish@shaw.ca

Office hours: Tuesday to Friday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Pastor: Fr. Rolf Hasenack, O.P.

Parish Council Chair: Mary McGovern

Mailing address: 10030 Third St, Sidney, V8L 3B3

Rectory: 250-652-1990

Web site: www.spparish.com

Administrative Assistant: Gary Koett

SUNDAY EUCHARIST at ST. ELIZABETH'S

10030 Third Street, Sidney

Saturdays at 5 pm, Sundays at 10:30 am.

at OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION

7742 West Saanich Road, Saanichton

Sundays at 8:30 am

WEEKDAY MASSES

Daily at St. Elizabeth's: Tues. Wed. & Thu. (9:00 am), and First Fridays (9:00 am)

Third Friday: 9:00 am at the Legion Manor, 7601 East Saanich Road, Saanichton

Last Friday: 11:00 am in the Chapel at Saanich Peninsula Hospital

Remaining Fridays: 9:00 am in a private home (for location see "This Week in Our Parish" ...)

RECONCILIATION at ST. ELIZABETH'S: Saturdays 4 - 4:30pm, or by appointment.



MAY 28, 2017- ASCENSION OF THE LORD

Acts 1:1-11, Ephesians 1:17-23,

Matthew 28:19,20

JUNE 4, 2017 - PENTECOST

Acts 2:1-11, 1 Corinthians 12:3-7, 12-13

John 20: 19-23



VISITING EUCHARISTIC MINISTRY

If you know of someone who is house-bound or in a nursing home/hospital and would like a visit from the Pastor or the Visitation Team, please call the office at 250-656-7433.

MISSION STATEMENT

*Let us be open
accepting individuals
sensitive to change
and willing to take
Courses untraditional,
unknown to us.*

*Let us live as
examples of God's Love.*

NEW TO THE PARISH? WELCOME!

Please fill out the information below so we can get to know you.
Pick up one of the blue information pamphlets next to the bulletins
in the foyer so you can get to know us.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Postal Code: _____

Email: _____

Need Pre-Authorized Debit package? Yes ___ No ___

Need donation envelopes? Yes ___ No ___

IN OUR PARISH COLLECTIONS

May 7.....	\$ 3,421
May 14	\$3,865
May 21	\$1,489
Pre-Authorized Debits (May).....	\$ 5,240
Monthly Target	\$ 23,000
Pope's Pastoral Works.....	\$ 2,196

K OF C PENNIES FOR HEAVEN

This weekend to raise funds for our Seminarians. Donations (including pennies!) gratefully welcome.

DIOCESAN RETREAT

Pray for our Bishop and clergy, on retreat this week on Quadra Island; preached by Papal Nuncio.

A SPECIAL EVENING: JUNE 9

Friday, June 9, 6:30 pm at St. Elizabeth's, you are invited to an informal evening with Bishop Gary Gordon and Fr. Thomas Chinnappa. Fr. Thomas, who arrived in Victoria on April 25, is currently spending time with Fr. Joe Prakash in Duncan. This gathering will be an opportunity to meet and welcome Fr. Thomas to our parish. Bishop Gary will outline his vision of Fr. Thomas' role in First Nations' pastoral work and his role in our parish. Mark this special 'meet 'n greet' on your calendar. Refreshments provided by the Knights of Columbus and the Catholic Women's League.

THANK YOU FROM THE KNIGHTS

The Knights of Columbus wish to express their appreciation to all those who participated in our recent garage sale. To all the volunteers - we could not have done it without you! A big thanks to all the parishioners who helped (there were many), the CWL ladies, and the spouses of many Knights. Your donations of saleable items also helped to make the event a big success.

TAIJI QIGONG IS CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

CONSERVATION / ENVIRONMENT POLICY

Parish Council is updating our 2005 conservation policy. If you are interested in assisting to draft a revised policy, please contact the office.

NEXT 2 WEEKS IN OUR PARISH

MONDAY, MAY 29 & JUNE 5

1:00 pm Faith Reflection - cancelled until Sep 18

TUESDAY, MAY 30 & JUNE 6

8:30 am **No Mass (May 30)**
9:00 am Mass at St. Elizabeth's (June 6)
11:30 am Friendly Hours Soup Kitchen

WEDNESDAY, MAY 31 & JUNE 7

9:00 am **No Mass-Communion Service (May 31)**
9:00 am Mass at St. Elizabeth's (June 7)
1:30 pm S.V.D.P. Meeting (May 31)

THURSDAY, JUNE 1 & 8

9:00 am **No Mass -Communion Service (June 1)**
9:00 am Mass at St. Elizabeth's (June 8) -
for intentions of Duchene & Antaya families
11:30 am Friendly Hours Soup Kitchen
2:00 pm Prayer Group

FRIDAY, JUNE 2 & 9

9:00 am **No Mass (June 2)**
9:00 am Mass at the home of Magdalene &
Kevin Campbell (June 9)
6:30 pm **Special evening at St. Elizabeth's
to introduce Fr. Thomas (June 9)**

SATURDAY, JUNE 3 & 10

4:00 pm Confession
5:00 pm Mass at St. Elizabeth's

SUNDAY, JUNE 4 & 11

8:30 am Mass at Our Lady of Assumption
10:30 am Mass at St. Elizabeth's
11:30 am Coffee Fellowship

For the latest schedule see tinyurl.com/sppcal

CALLING ALL THE LADIES

Wednesday, June 14, 2 pm at St. Elizabeth's, the CWL invites all the ladies in our parish to a "Summer in Sidney Fashion Show", an afternoon of fun, fellowship, fashion & food. Your friends, relatives & neighbours are welcome to attend. You are invited to bring a "pot luck" snack/finger food. By donation (proceeds will go to the Palliative Care Unit of Saanich Peninsula Hospital).



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRADUATES

- Joseph Dulce
- Freya Evangelista
- Vanna Funk
- Charlotte Junker
- Chelsea MacEwan
- Godwin Po
- Sayril John Silaya
- Jared Silveron
- Karen Vagay
- Laura Williams

Class
of 2017

Be the change
that you
want to see
in the
world

Prayers and best wishes to this year's High School Graduates as they venture forth to a new chapter in their lives.

If you, or someone you know, has graduated from high school, college or university, please share that information by contacting the parish office.

K OF C BURSARY OPPORTUNITY

\$500 K of C bursaries available to Catholics attending a post-secondary institution. June 30th cutoff. Applicants must be under 25 yrs. old as of June 30. Contact Roy Battilana at 250-652-0340.

PILGRIMAGE TOUR: SEPT.10-19

For the 100th Anniversary of Mary appearing at Fatima, QS Tours from Toronto is offering a 10 day tour to Portugal, Spain & France, including Fatima and Lourdes. If you are interested, call Linda Wiebe 250-655-0232 for more information.

PATRICIA ROOKE COURSE PLANNED

If there is sufficient interest, Dr. Patricia Rooke will give a course entitled "Pinocchio, Jiminy Cricket & Christian Conscience", 10 Tuesdays, from Sep. 19 to Nov. 28, 2 - 4 pm. **Please let Freddie Brand or the office know if you will attend.** To register email spparish@shaw.ca.

PENTECOST SUNDAY CELEBRATION: JUNE 4

Sun, June 4, 2 - 4 pm. Praise, worship, fellowship, food and refreshments. Everyone welcome! St. Patrick's Parish Hall; 2060 Haultain St. For information, call David at 250-383-9955 or email victoriaccrs@gmail.com.



VICTORIA DIOCESE CELEBRATES 125 YEARS

Sunday, July 9, 12:30 - 4 pm. A picnic to celebrate 125 years of the Diocese of Victoria. On the Grounds of St. Ann's Academy. There will be live music (Jazz Band & Coastline Fiddlers), games for children, tours of the Chapel (our first Cathedral), & a display on Archbishop Seghers. Bring your own food or have some Filipino BBQ pig and noodles, hotdogs & burgers. Drinks, food & ice cream available for purchase. There will be tents and chairs on site, or you can bring your own chair.

DIOCESAN FAMILY CONFERENCE: AUG. 24-27

Aug. 24 - 27: 5th annual Diocesan Family Conference at **Nanose Bay**. Last year 300+ people of all ages spent a weekend together with their families relaxing on the beach, listening to amazing speakers, singing around the beach fire, playing and praying together. This year our speakers are Josh and Denise Grimard from Telegraph Creek, BC where they serve as missionaries. The theme is *Our Mission: in the family, in the community & the world*. Special guest Ryan Mitchell from Face-2-Face Ministries! For more info email reineandian@hotmail.com. Registration will be open soon on the Diocesan website: www.rcdvictoria.org.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Diocese of Victoria and Island Catholic Schools are looking for:

- Payroll Administrator & Accounting Assistant
- Computer Technician
- Full-time Administrative Assistant - St. Joseph's School, Victoria
- Early Childhood Educator - St. Joseph's School, Victoria

Application forms and details available online at cisdv.bc.ca/employment-opportunities.php.

AN AUTOMATED DEFIBRILLATOR ...

has been installed at St. Elizabeth's on the wall outside the handicapped washroom.