

The Scripture readings of this weekend have the familiar image of the shepherd as a leader.

In the beautiful, comforting **Psalms 23** we are reminded that the God we believe in is a Shepherd God who knows us and is close to us and who is very much with us no matter what happens: a caring and compassionate God who nurtures, restores, comforts, guides and leads us to a restful place and time. There God takes away fear and anxiety, encourages and empowers, and anoints us with oil so that strengthened and full of hope we can go forth in life's journey and be for others a sign of mercy and hope and peace.

The civil rulers (kings) and religious leaders of ancient Israel were also called to be shepherds of their people. The first reading of **Jeremiah 23:1-6** expresses the Lord forcefully taking the king to task for neglecting his responsibilities to the people of Judah: "Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture." As we read this passage we live in the context of sometimes poor leadership shown in what happens in our world today. We all can enumerate numerous examples in many different aspects of our collective life where we have fallen into destructive behaviour. Jeremiah reminds us though that God knows and reaches out to our world; God cares and is persistent in guiding us home: "I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, their family, their community."

Today's Gospel of **Mark 6:30-34** shows that Jeremiah's promise of God's care for us has taken flesh in Jesus, our shepherd: "As Jesus went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; he began to teach them many things." Jesus is still teaching us the "many things" about God's love and care for us, about the need to listen and to reach out, about the mission to bring about true justice and reconciliation and its fruit of peace.

As disciples and apostles of Jesus we are all called to that compassion felt by Jesus, not an emotional feeling but rather a gut-wrenching experience which brings us to "see" and also to "act"; that brings us to shepherd those in need. Our knowledge and our relationship with God bring us to share God's mercy with those who find themselves in their own "deserted places" of anger and anguish, of depression and sadness, of faithlessness and hopelessness. On our own we cannot address the needs. But like the first disciples of Jesus we have been commissioned as "apostles" with the authority and power given to us through Jesus' Spirit challenging and guiding us on the journey.

Statement in Response to Penelakut Island Graves

On 13 July 2021, **Bishop Gary** issued a statement in response to the disclosure of more than 160 unmarked graves on the site of the former Kuper Island Indian Residential School, also known as Kuper Island Indian Industrial School:

"The Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria grieves for the victims of the Kuper Island Residential School, and apologizes for its role in the operation of residential schools. Our hearts go out in sadness for the little ones who were torn from their families and never returned home. This is a very hard time for the survivors and the families. I say again the words of my June 3, 2021 Statement of Apology and Commitment: On behalf of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria, I apologize for the harm caused due to our complicity involved in the operations of the residential schools. I am committed to the process of healing, reconciliation, and education regarding this tragic history. We now listen with humility and

respect, as the direction to go and the steps to be taken in response to these disclosures must lie in the hands of the communities and Indigenous people most affected. We commit to being accountable and contributing to these next-step solutions.”

The disclosure of the unmarked graves was announced by the Penelakut Tribe on July 8, 2021. The graves are on Penelakut Island, in the area on which the Kuper Island Indian Residential School once stood. The school was opened by the Canadian government in 1889, who subcontracted the operation of the school to various Roman Catholic organizations: the Diocese of Victoria from 1891 – 1907; the missionaries of the Company of Mary from 1907 – 1957, and the Oblates of Mary Immaculate from 1957 – 1969. The government took over administration of the school in 1969 and closed it in 1975. In the decade preceding the Truth and Reconciliation inquiry, Glen Doughty, a former Oblate brother who worked at the school, pled guilty to sexually abusing students in the ‘60s and ‘70s.

The geographic area of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria encompasses Vancouver Island and the surrounding islands. The Diocese was involved in the operation of two residential schools, the Kuper Island Indian Residential School and Christie Island Residential School on Meares Island, northeast of Tofino. The Diocese’s archival records related to both these schools were forwarded to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission during its process (2008 – 2015), and remain available through the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

Bishop Gary’s Statement of Apology and Commitment can be found online at <https://www.rcdvictoria.org/special-announcements/statement-of-apology-and-commitment>.

In it, Bishop Gary commits the Diocese to assist First Nations communities in the work of searching for loved ones who went missing at the residential schools in the Diocese; to help facilitate mental health and counselling support for individuals and communities in the Diocese; and to continue to seek pathways of healing for all those on the journey of truth and reconciliation.

A national Indian Residential School Crisis Line has been set up by the Indian Residential School Survivors Society (IRSSS) to provide support for former students and those affected. People can access emotional and crisis referral services by calling the 24-hour line at 1-866-925-4419.

REVISED MASS SCHEDULE

We have now returned to our pre-Covid Mass schedule with no restrictions in numbers and no registration necessary:

Three Sunday Masses:

- **Saturday 5:00 pm Mass at St. Elizabeth**
- **Sunday 8:30 am Mass at Our Lady of the Assumption**
- **Sunday 10:30 am Mass at St. Elizabeth followed by coffee fellowship**
- **Sunday 1:00 pm Mass in French at St. Jean-Baptiste in Victoria**

Weekday masses are as follows:

Tuesday to Thursday at 9:00 am at St. Elizabeth

Friday at 10:00 am in a home in Brentwood

We hope that we will be able to celebrate Mass at the Hospital and at the Legion Manor in August but we need to wait for the approval from the respective institutions.

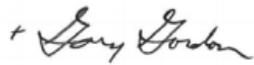
- If you wish to receive the **Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession)**, please, contact Fr. Rolf at 250-656-7433 to arrange for a day and time.
- The **hospital** and **home Visiting Ministries** will continue to be by phone or electronically.

NEW MEMO FROM BISHOP GARY GORDON

“Dear Pastors, Administrators, Deacons, and People of God, The move to Step 3 on July 1 of BC’s Restart is a joyous occasion for the people of this province. Thanks to the efforts and sacrifices we have all made, and to the continued uptake of the vaccine, we have now reached a point where we can gather and worship in much the same way we did before the pandemic: with full capacity in our churches; with music and singing; with hymnals and bulletins; with altar servers and extraordinary ministers of Communion; and with gatherings, meetings and events before and after Mass.

However, Covid is not over yet. Through these many months, we have learned that many of the practices we detailed in previous Directives are effective tools to prevent the spread of communicable diseases, including physical distancing, good hand hygiene, mask wearing, enhanced cleaning and sanitizing, and improved air quality and ventilation. Although many restrictions are no longer required, each pastor or parish administrator will determine the best practices in their parish to keep our churches safe places to gather for our elders, people with vulnerabilities, and all members of our community. As we enjoy these happier days, we continue to pray for the many people and places which are still suffering the devastating effects of this pandemic. With God’s help, may they soon find peace and healing so that our global joy may be complete.

In Communion,



Most Reverend Gary Gordon Bishop of Victoria”

Among the [general and liturgical directives](#) are the following:

1. Parishioners remain dispensed from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass at a church.
2. Before attending Mass, each person must carry out their own personal health check by reviewing the entry requirements (*see # 2 in the directives*). Any person who does not pass the health check must not attend Mass.
3. Face coverings are recommended for all people 12 and older who are not yet fully vaccinated (ie. two weeks have passed since their second vaccine dose). Some people will choose to continue to wear a face covering even after being fully vaccinated, and this choice must be respected.
4. Communion will continue to be distributed on the hand only. No communion by cup at this time.
5. Parishioners should continue to not to shake hands or hug each other, unless sitting together as a family unit. Continuing the sign of peace with a gesture, such as bowing, is recommended.
6. Holy Water fonts will continue to remain empty.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2021 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES!

Angelina Berryman; Ashley Bihis; Ava and Eve Blakley; Madison Derzaph; Olivia Furtado; Anna Mclsaac ; Luis Quiroga; Dylan and Joshua Rodrigues; Kristel Toribio

If your name is not on the list or you know others who have graduated this year, please let us know.

THANK YOU:

To **Steve Otway** who came with his equipment and to **Francois Vinay and several Knights of Columbus** for power-washing areas around Our Lady of the Assumption Church and the rectory. Great job!!

DONATIONS: If you plan on dropping off or sending your regular weekly offertory envelopes, please try and consolidate your white envelope givings into one cheque and into one envelope, rather than putting your contributions into 3 or 4 separate white envelopes. Our counters appreciate your help!

E-TRANSFER DONATIONS CAN BE SENT DIRECTLY TO OUR PARISH

Effective immediately, E-Transfer donations can come directly to spparish@shaw.ca .

Our bank account is set-up with “**Auto-Deposit**” feature and therefore **we do not require a security question to complete the transfer**. Thank you for all your weekly donations, including Pre-Authorized Debit’s (PAD’s). Your generosity is helping the Parish to stay afloat.

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP – COORDINATOR NEEDED

This important person(s) would be responsible for coordinating with the various Ministries on serving coffee, tea, juice and cookies (!) after the Sunday 10:30 Mass. Many thanks to Diane and Tony Guglielmi who have volunteered their time in this role. Anyone interested can reach out to Diane at 250 652-4450.

INDIGENOUS CANADA – learn more

There are numerous ways to learn more about Indigenous worldview, history and culture. Indigenous Canada is a FREE 12-lesson Online Course from the Faculty of Native Studies, University of Alberta, that explores Indigenous histories and contemporary issues in Canada. This course explores key issues facing Indigenous peoples today from a historical and critical perspective highlighting national and local Indigenous-settler relations. Topics for the 12 lessons include the fur trade and other exchange relationships, land claims and environmental impacts, legal systems and rights, political conflicts and alliances, Indigenous political activism, and contemporary Indigenous life, art and its expressions. Register or info.: <https://www.ualberta.ca/admissions-programs/online-courses/indigenous-canada/index.html>

BURSARIES AND AWARDS – EXTENDED UNTIL AUG. 31

The Diocese of Victoria offers bursaries and awards to outstanding students. The deadline for applications is **August 31st**. More information and application forms are available at the following links:

[The Jawl Bundon LLP Bursary](#) (\$2500): for a grade 12 Catholic student who has been accepted to a post-secondary institution. Preference given to Indigenous students, and to students outside of Greater Victoria.

[The Blessed Marie Anne Blondin Bursary](#) (\$1000): for a lay woman who is enrolled in a program or course for ministry in the Church: religious ed., social justice, liturgy, social action, care of the sick, etc.

[The Char Deslippe Memorial Award](#) (\$500): for a teacher working in Island Catholic Schools or a parish catechist serving in children, youth or adult ministry.

Our Parish is also providing bursaries; send us your request at spparish@shaw.ca