

## Thursday in the Second Week of Easter April 23, 2020

Before Jesus began his public ministry, his cousin is called to speak Creator's Words to those in the Holy Land. In Luke 3:1-14, we are introduced to John son of Zachariah and Elizabeth. In these extraordinary times, Creator calls each and all of us to consider the work of preparing the way for Jesus of Nazareth Son of God in our generation.

### What in the passage catches my attention?

In the first words of the third chapter of the gospel of Luke, this story is rooted in a particular time and place in a way which would be more easily understood by Indigenous People. Luke tells everyone that Creator spoke to John in the wilderness. For Indigenous Peoples, Creator often speaks and provides visions to individuals who are fasting away from their communities out on the Land. Luke also locates John within a particular family embedded among hereditary spiritual teachers and priests. A list of the spiritual and political leaders identifies a particular time in history. Among Indigenous Peoples, someone can have a family name, a hereditary name, spirit names, clan name, and a name from the creatures of Mother Earth. Hereditary names carry incredible wealth among their People. Roles and responsibilities also accompany these names in order for the community to be strengthened and to survive. Birth names may just be used for that early stage in life. Additional names may be added to mark other milestones or acts of courage or feats of strength. During introductions, Indigenous People also identify key spiritual teachers and healers who have contributed to their health and well-being.

The quotation from the fortieth chapter of the prophet Isaiah always inspires me. These words of compassion were first uttered to the people of Jerusalem to give them hope in a time of chaos and impending death. In the gospel of Luke, Creator calls John to a very specific ministry. John will prepare the way for the Messiah to live among those who have descended from the twelve sons of Jacob and the strangers in the Promised Land. As a People of the Resurrection, you and I are called to this same ministry in preparing this generation for the Coming of the Risen Jesus at the end of time and space as we know these to be.

When John speaks to those who have come out into the wilderness, these words also catch my attention: **"Produce fruit that shows that you have changed your hearts and lives. Don't even think about saying to yourselves, 'Abraham is our father'. I tell you that God is able to raise up Abraham's children from these very stones."** Luke 3:8 This straightforward language challenges those gathered to change their thinking and their behaviours and adopt a very different understanding to guide their actions.

### What is God saying in this passage?

Not everyone thrives in confrontational relationships. Most prefer a more indirect approach in communication. Some try to avoid conflict at all costs. In August 1993 at the National Native Convocation, Archbishop Michael Peers listened to story after story from Anglican Indigenous participants about the destructive impact of residential schools on themselves and others in their various communities. On the next day, Archbishop Peers issued a formal apology to the Indigenous Peoples of Canada participating in the physical, emotional, cultural, and emotional abuse of children as well as in the breaking down of extended family and community relationships. Archbishop Peers

confessed, “We tried to remake you in our own image.” Since that time, the government of Canada also issued an apology in the House of Parliament in June 2008 with Chiefs, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Healers present. As Bishop of Indigenous Anglicans, Mark MacDonald has written about the spiritual harm inflicted on Indigenous Peoples through a history of assimilation and oppressive structures. In July 2019 at General Synod, Archbishop Fred Hiltz told both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples gathered as leaders in the Anglican Church of Canada, “I confess our sin in failing to acknowledge that as First Peoples living here for thousands of years, you had a spiritual relationship with the Creator and with the Land. We did not care enough to learn how your spirituality has infused your governance, social structures, and family life.” Archbishop Hiltz said more in his apology about the spiritual harm perpetrated in the past as being incompatible with the Gospel of Jesus and having no place in Worship. Members of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples accepted this apology, looking forward to participating in the ongoing transformation of this part of the Church.

We live in extraordinary times between the first appearances of the Risen Jesus and the coming again of the Creator’s Holy One. Abraham and Sarah believed that Creator would provide offspring and a Promised Land so they actively waited for what Creator was going to do. We too rely on Creator to continue to bring us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, and out of death into life.

### **What is God asking us to be and do?**

If one is to move forward in the direction of provided by Creator on our respective journeys, one needs to know what has happened in the past. For an overview, read **TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION OF CANADA: CALLS TO ACTION (2012)**. This interim report provides a summary of what happened to Indigenous Peoples through residential schools. In order to learn about the personal impact of residential schools, read what Wab Kinew says about his reconciliation with his father in **THE REASON YOU WALK (2015)** or read what Edmund Metatawabin says about the treaty negotiations and establishment of a residential school in his traditional territories **UP GHOST RIVER (2014)**. Discover the humour and resilience of Thomas King in **THE INCOVENIENT INDIAN (2012)**. Gather stories about the impact of residential schools and the removal of children from Indigenous families by talking with Indigenous People living nearby.

One also needs to know both how oppressive dynamics work to continue to generate destruction and how constructive forces in place now present this generation with choices to make in order develop new relationships with Indigenous Peoples from coast to coast to coast. Read what Bob Joseph identifies as being in place and at work causing destruction in **21 THINGS YOU MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT THE INDIAN ACT: HELPING CANADIANS MAKE RECONCILIATION WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES A REALITY (2018)**. The Anglican Church of Canada has produced a number of podcasts with the Reverend Canon Dr. Ginny Doctor **SACRED TEACHINGS: PATH TO THE STRONGHOLD** last year and has started a second season so watch the Reverend Canon Dr. Martin Broken Leg in his podcast entitled **HEART LEARNING**.

Let us be creative in the ways in which we connect with what Creator is doing on Turtle Island.

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