

## Thursday in the Twenty-Fourth Week after Pentecost: November 19, 2020

On the journey towards Jerusalem, Jesus heals those who suffered from leprosy and continues to teach about what will happen in the last days when Creator and Great Spirit would intervene in history to put an end to afflictions and to overcome injustice and evil.

### Read Luke 17:20-37. What catches my attention in this gospel reading?

On the journey towards Jerusalem, Jesus is aware that the religious and political leaders are plotting to do him harm. However, Jesus seizes every opportunity to challenge them, using common stories hoping for some to turn from their self-centred plans and gain a new understanding of the generosity of Creator and Great Spirit. The religious and political leaders ask Jesus to identify when “the Son of Man” will come. Some translators identify this unique person as “the Messiah” or “the Human One”. Others refer to this event as “the coming of the Kingdom of God” or “the fulfilment on earth of God’s will” or “the beginning of the Day of the Last Judgment” or “the arrival of the New Jerusalem”. Jesus points out that people cannot count down the days on the calendar like any other celebration in order to predict when this event will happen. People cannot point out particular places where this event will take place. Jesus reminds the religious and political leaders that the One sent by Creator and Great Spirit will be difficult to identify. Jesus point out that this event will sneak up like a thief in the night. Jesus is very bold. Jesus states that the Human One is hidden in plain sight and implies that soon everything will be revealed.

Jesus then speaks to those who follow him, watching him and listening to him. Jesus challenges those who follow him too. Jesus tells them about a time of severe trial when those who follow him will want their feelings of abandonment to end, their experiences of violence to stop, and the risk of harm to be greatly diminished. In these circumstances, those who trust in Creator and Great Spirit will look for signs and listen for when their suffering will lessen. Those who rest in the presence and power of love will be surprised too. Like dark clouds massing overhead and winds gusting with some force, an observer knows that something will happen but it is not until a great flash of light illuminates the skies from one side to the other that she or he knows that the storm has finally arrived and the rains will fall in torrents. Jesus tells his followers to be patient, saying **“First, the Human One must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.” Luke 17:25.** More is yet to happen.

Jesus uses two examples taken from stories about events which happened before Abraham and Sarah and cites three instances from ordinary life which carry a certain terror in them. Apocalyptic stories are full of destruction and death. Noah and his family survive a gargantuan flood while the rest of humanity drown. Lot and his wife flee Sodom but his wife looks back to watch the city and all of it’s people be consumed by a raging inferno so Lot’s wife becomes a pillar of salt. In more common circumstances, one on a rooftop doesn’t understand what is happening and goes downstairs to gather together precious valuables, losing the opportunity to be brought into eternity in a new creation. For reasons unknown in the last two instances, one is left behind in bed and another is left behind while working in the fields. In trying to understand the meaning of this teaching, those who follow Jesus ask him to give them more information about when and where this final event will take place. Jesus provides a cryptic answer, understandable by those who know that where vultures circle overhead, a corpse can be found.

### **Reread Luke 17:20-37. What is God saying in this gospel passage?**

For those who live in times of great turmoil when the bulk of humanity are unable to change the circumstances of their lives or the lives of their children and grandchildren, hope can only be found in the sudden intervention of Creator and Great Spirit. Such a radical act in the history of humankind puts an end to oppression, stops terrible acts of violence, frees the captives, and causes the cessation of the brutality of poverty. However, many of us are not looking forward to the coming of the Human One in the way described by apocalyptic speakers and writers. Be prepared for Creator and Great Spirit to act decisively as one who walks in a good way. However, many of us want more time to be connected to Creator and Great Spirit and to do the work set before us for which we have been prepared and equipped to do before this amazing event happens.

The National Indigenous Archbishop Mark MacDonald has sent letters on behalf of Pimatisiwin Nipi to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as well as the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations Carolyn Bennett and the Minister of Indigenous Services Marc Miller in the support of Chief Chris Moonais and Council for Neskantaga First Nation. Most of this Indigenous community have been evacuated to Thunder Bay in mid-October 2020 after an oily film was discovered in the reservoirs of their newly constructed water treatment plant. Some remained on their traditional territories to prepare for the eventual return of evacuees after the water treatment plant is operational again. However, as Minister Miller acknowledge publicly in October 2020, further work needs to be completed with the water distribution system and the wastewater system in order for safe, clean water to be available in the school, health centre, and band offices as well as in the homes of community members. Copies of these letter have been sent to Chief Chris Moonais, Chief Dean Owen of Pikangikum FN (who has worked with Pimatisiwin Nipi over the years and is currently working with the engineers Bob White and Dave Steeves from the Pikangikum Water Project to start another phase in bringing safe, clean water to the most vulnerable in that community), and Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler of Nishnawbe Aski Nation as well as Bishop Lydia Mamakwa of the Mishamikoweesh Indigenous Ministry in northwestern Ontario and eastern Manitoba and Archdeacon Deborah Kraft at St. Paul's Anglican Church in Thunder Bay who provides leadership among the Indigenous Peoples living in that city. Pimatisiwin Nipi asked the federal government to develop collaborative working relationships with the leaders in each of the Indigenous communities with either long term or short-term water advisories so that capacity in knowledge and skills among these Peoples will be built in bringing safe, clean water to their homes as these water advisories are addressed in the future. Across Canada, about 20% of First Nations communities are under boil water advisories. In Ontario, about 40% of First Nations communities remain without safe, clean water in their homes.

Pimatisiwin Nipi grew out of the leadership of Archbishop MacDonald in gathering people from a variety of Anglican Churches in southern Ontario upon the request of former Chief Gord Peters of Pikangikum FN in addressing the need to bring hope to youth and young adults since the suicide rate had become the highest per capita in the world in the beginning years of this millennia. Over the years donations have been held by the Primates World Relief and Development Fund which Pikangikum FN will use for this current project planned by Chief Dean Owen and Council. To continue with this work of supporting the leadership in First Nations, Pimatisiwin Nipi has pivoted at this time to support WATER FIRST in working collaboratively with 3 Tribal Councils on the eastern shores of Georgian Bay in training young

adults from their Indigenous communities in a 15-month long internship program in drinking water analysis and environmental water management. Pimatisiwin Nipi will meet in the coming week with WATER FIRST to learn more about their plans to complete their next Internship Program in the coming year. Pimatisiwin Nipi supports Water First in their engagement with the leadership of these 3 Tribal Councils in selecting recruits from among their members as well as mentors who will assist these interns. The internship is more than a water science training program. It is a partnership built on the foundation of trust between WATER FIRST and their partner communities that specifically addresses community needs. With these partners, WATER FIRST will weave western science together with traditional ecological knowledge in the process of getting their interns out on the land and in the waters.

WATER FIRST builds capacity in First Nations communities so that interns become qualified young adults to operate and maintain key water infrastructure as well as to participate in technical decision-making in water resource management and environmental protection. The Executive Director of Bimose Tribal Council Amy Comegan explains about the most recent WATER FIRST program, "The internship has been welcomed by our communities, will all Chiefs fully on board. Everyone understands how important it is for our youth and young adults to receive training in the water sciences, because it is key to our ability to sustainably provide safe drinking water in First Nations communities." Pierre Sinclair from Obashkaandagaang FN was a carpenter living at Washagamis Bay. He attended the entry level training in Dryden. Under the direction of his mentor, Pierre Sinclair learned how to take raw water samples and collect data from these water samples. In completing his internship, he will be qualified to work at the Water Treatment Plant under construction in his community when it opens. Sunny Payash from White Dog FN lost two of his nieces due to the mercury contamination in the Wabigoon and English River systems. He is committed to gaining knowledge and skills in the operation of water treatment plants and in managing wastewater systems, participating in on-line learning due to the pandemic and being mentored in the water treatment plant in his community.

WATER FIRST receives most of its funding for the Internship Program from Indigenous Services Canada. Significant funding will also be provided by Anishinabek Nation in North Bay for the Internship Program among the three Tribal Councils along the eastern shores of Georgian Bay. Other funding comes from a variety of sources, including corporations, foundations, and community supporters. The Primates Relief and Development Fund has completed an agreement with WATER FIRST and is in the process of providing Pimatisiwin Nipi with a designation for an account in which donations will be held in our upcoming fundraising campaign in Advent and released to WATER FIRST. More instructions will follow next week about how to make a donation to support young adults and their Indigenous communities to ensure that safe, clean water is available in the homes of their FN.

On Sunday, November 22, 2020, Bishop Lydia Mamakwa will present a Reflection on the Scriptures in celebration of the Reign of Christ by a video clip which will be available to those worshipping at Trinity Anglican Church in Aurora and to those watching on the YouTube platform from home. Drum Carrier Nanocashee (Hummingbird) Jake Charles from the Chippewas of Georgina Island will invoke the Ancestors at the beginning of our time of worship with a Welcoming Song and will send them back to the Spirit World at the end of our eucharistic celebration. He is also a Pipe Carrier and Owner of First Nation Cultural Tours. Anishinabek Grandmother Mim Harder will provide leadership in the Prayers of

the People with a Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving. The Endowment Fund at Trinity Anglican Church in Aurora plans to provide a gift of \$2,000 to Pimatisiwin Nipi this year.

**Reread Luke 17:20-37. What is God calling us to be and do?**

Consider making donations to your church to be sent to the Primates World Relief and Development Fund in support of the WATER FIRST upcoming Internship Program with 3 Tribal Councils on the eastern shores of Georgian Bay. Continue to pray for Neskantaga FN and those who provide tangible support to the evacuees and those remaining on their traditional territories at this time. Look and listen for the ways in which Creator and Great Spirit show us how to make positive changes in the work of Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples from coast to coast to coast.