



OFS Canada JPIC Communiqué JPIC May 2022

Nota Bene: This is the last issue of JPIC Communiqué that will be sent by your National JPIC Team as our term comes to end in July 2022 with the National Elective Chapter. We hope that in the past several years our readers have benefited from the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation articles that we have edited and sent you. If our JPIC articles helped you to be of one mind and heart with all brothers and sisters, regardless of where they live, we have achieved our goal. Migwich.

Listening to Indigenous Voices By Lanny Hui, ofs



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In the fall of 2021, our regional fraternity council in Western Canada decided to organize Zoom meetings based on 11-session program called “Listening to Indigenous Voices”. Topics include the indigenous story of creation, a bird-eye view of indigenous-related history and current issues and pathways to decolonization and indigenization.

We began the program with the “**Blanket Exercise**” led by a Squamish elder Deacon

Rennie Nahanee. A copy of [the Blanket Exercise](#) is available online from Kairos. We are also grateful to Barbara Wyse, who is also an indigenous Secular Franciscan, to join our group in the first few weeks. Before the meeting each week, we read the assigned chapter and extensive supplemental materials, including the “**Spiritual Connections**” At the end of each chapter.

At the beginning of each meeting, we prayed St. Francis’ prayer in front of San Damiano Cross and we acknowledged the land where each participant resides. During our discussion, we took turn to answer questions from the book. Sharing circle worked best for us, because each speaker had a chance to speak without being interrupted; after each person had a turn to speak, we had a chance to comment or raise questions. The discussion lasted about 1.5 hours. Afterwards, we listened to a hymn to reflect on what we discuss, then



Photo from Kairos

we said a word or a sentence to summarize our thoughts. We ended the session with a short Glory-be prayer.

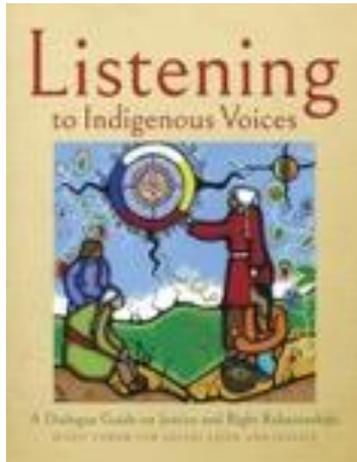


Photo from www.ltiv.ca

At every meeting, as we discussed what we read, we learned few things, such as:

- It was estimated that 112 million people lived in North America before the colonization; between 80-100 million of these people died due to epidemics, violent conquest, and exploitation.
- Which side of a street you live in London (Ontario) can determine whether you can access clean water.
- We, the Franciscans, like Indigenous people, value the kinship with the creation; St. Francis' Canticle of the Sun resonates with the Haudenosaunee Greeting: Giving Thanks for Our Relationships (page 5 of the following link: <https://ltiv.ca/static/land.pdf>).
- The land acknowledgement at each meeting increased our awareness of the painful history suffered by the indigenous people, our current responsibilities, and hope for the future.
- Treaties are covenants that bind people together with ties of kinship, mutual responsibilities and reciprocity.
- Pope Nicholas V's *Dum Diversas* or Doctrine of Discovery (1452) and *Romanus Pontifex* (1455) and Pope Alexander VI's *Inter Caetera* (1493) were misused by the European colonizers to justify their violent actions against indigenous people around the world. They occupied the land first before justifying their greed with these papal bulls.
- The average Canadian is ignorant of dispossession, dependency, and oppression experienced by Indigenous peoples because "the very basis of Canada's relations with Indigenous peoples has been wrapped in falsehoods" (Arthur Manuel).
- "The child welfare system is the new residential school. In addition to forcibly removing children from their families, communities, and culture - it is a direct path to the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls". (Excerpt from Session 8)
- Being aware of suffering and tragedy experienced by Indigenous peoples is not enough; we must commit to growth and transformation of whatever we claim to know. (Session 9)

Interestingly, the book, though published by the Jesuit Forum, does not mention [CCCB's Catholic Response to Doctrine of Discovery and Terra Nullius](#). From its appendix, we have learnt that Pope Paul III's *Sublimis Deus* (1537) spoke in defense of indigenous people and subsequently echoed and reaffirmed by Pope Urban VIII's *Commissum Nobis* (1639), Pope Benedict IV's *Immensa Pastorum* (1741), Pope Gregory XVI's *In Supremo Apostolatus* (1839), and Leo XIII *In Plurimis* (1888). It is very important for us, Catholics, to be aware of these documents when we speak about the history of the indigenous people.

As we progress, each session was more challenging than the previous one. We took our time to address what touched each of us and heard what everyone has to say. We respected each other's opinions so that everyone felt safe to share their thoughts.

We'd like to encourage all regional or local fraternities to organize sessions to help members familiarize themselves with the indigenous affairs in Canada. If any fraternity wish to use the book "Listening to Indigenous Voices", the book and other resources can be purchased or viewed:

- From Novalis https://en.novalis.ca/products/listening-to-indigenous-voices?_pos=732&_sid=b6c7e8006&_ss=r (\$20.95 per book after GST, consider buying minimum of 4 copies to avoid shipping charges).
- From Itiv.ca: <https://itiv.weebly.com/order-the-guide.html> (\$26.75 per book, shipping included but may take a while)
- Further information from Lanny Hui at: Lanny.hui@gmail.com

Mt. 21:43 "I have done what is mine to do; now you go, and do what is yours to do."

- Stay up to date on JPIC Issues and Actions and bookmark Franciscan Voice Canada at <https://www.franciscanvoicecanada.com/>
- Restez au courant des actions et des problèmes liés à JPIC et afficher en favori Chemins Franciscains à l'adresse <https://www.cheminsfranciscains.ca>