

Transcript of National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop Chris Harper's video message to the Church for National Indigenous Day of Prayer, Friday, June 21, 2024

Greetings, my brothers and sisters in Christ. I want to take this time to say "thank you" to everyone. If you've taken a pause in this day of Friday, June 21st, National Indigenous Day of Prayer; or in the secular calendar, the National Indigenous People's Day holiday. I also want to acknowledge that June shares, this month, also as National Indigenous History month.

And so, in taking this moment just to pause and to reflect and to think about the Indigenous context that we're going to be speaking in, I thought it only appropriate that I read from the gospel that is appointed for this day, and it is from the Gospel of St. John in the first chapter and beginning at the first verse, and I'm only going to read to the end of verse five.

"Long ago, in the time before all days, before the creation of all things, the one who is known as the Word was there face to face with the Great Spirit. This Word fully represents Creator and shows us who He is and what He's like. He has always been there from the beginning, for the Word and the Creator are one and the same. Through the Word, all things came into being, and not one thing exists that He did not create. Creator's life shined out from the Word, giving light to all human beings. This is the true light that shines to all the peoples of the world and shines on everyone. The light shines into the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it or put it out."

I thought this part just to focus on would be where we'll go with today. "This is the true light that comes to all peoples of the world and shines on everyone. The light shines into the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it or put it out." "The darkness cannot overcome it or put it out."

In this short time and space, it is important that we remember who we are called as people of God, to be spiritual beings in physical bodies, and thus to talk with the Creator, and to pray always. And so, with that, we're going to say a short prayer before I actually get into my little talk.

As the collect is appointed for this day: "Creator God from you, every family on Heaven and Earth takes its name. You have rooted and grounded us in your covenant love and empowered us by your spirit to speak the truth in love, and to walk in your way towards justice and wholeness. Mercifully grant that your people journeying together in partnership may be strengthened and guided to help one another to grow into the full stature of Christ, who is our light and our life. Amen."

"This is the true light that comes into the peoples of all the world and shines on everyone." In this past year, I have been blessed to be able to travel from diocese to diocese and from community to community, and I have been blessed to be able to see where the light is shining in the darkness of the doom and gloom, and at the same time, the concerns and worries of the world around us. I have seen where ministries are being built up and where ministries are in decline.

But always through there, I see the most important thread that is there, and that is the light of faith. In all that the people are doing and saying, where they're proud of what they have done and accomplished so far. And at the same time, the struggles to try to build into the stature of Christ, and to live their life out in the faithful witness. It has been a joy, it has been a wondrous adventure just to be able to uplift hearts and to hear the songs of people, especially in the excited states that they are, about where they think that everything is going well. And they want to share that with everybody who have not heard. And that is about the witness of faith. That is about letting your light shine.

I've been excited to share some of my stories as I travel across this land from place to place, diocese to diocese, and parish to parish, from convention to synods. And one of them is that one of my last parishes where the kids gathered to sing their song of "This Little Light of Mine" and that light shining brightly in the darkness, and how we, the children of God are called to remind that everything we do casts a new light out into the darkness, and it dispels and pushes away the clouds of gloom and dread. But instead, that light brings hope, warmth, and peace, and healing.

We in Canada need this, especially through this month of National Indigenous History month, to take time to learn about the complicated history, the legacy that each and every one of us have inherited. It's important to take even just this one day of the month, June 21st, which is set aside for the National Indigenous Day of Prayer, or the National Indigenous People's Day, the holiday.

Take these moments to let your light shine for what your church is doing and what you are doing to bring reconciliation into action. As I've been saying, reconciliation, if you look it up in the dictionary, is a noun. We need to make it into a verb; something we do together. This is the hope of the Church, that we can start to walk as one, to build healing, to build relationship, to build our family up again, so that we together can walk and letting our light shine for all the world to see, that we can reconcile, that we can be peace and healing, and that we can share this joy and this hope, this message, this message that is given to us.

And that we can stand just exactly as that, as was mentioned. "This is the true light that comes into all the peoples of the world and shines on everyone. The light shines into the

darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it or put it out." If God's Word says that, then we need to have faith and believe.

And we can do this together, for this is what the Church was called to be, as a family and a community. I believe this, I have faith, and I have great hope. This is our church. This is our faith. This is our ministry and calling, to walk together as one in a family of God, where we can support each other, bless each other, and we can heal together.

So, on this day, may we let our light shine, not only on Sundays but every day; and where peace, hope, love, forgiveness, blessing, and the grace of God flow through us and out into the world.

May God bless you, as we take time, any of these days within the month, to learn about our history, our shared history, as well as on this June 21st. So, from me, the National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop, I send to all of you blessings, love, and peace. And a blessing, the blessing of God Almighty; the blessing of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be upon you, your homes, and ministries this day and all days to come.

Amen.

God bless you. God bless you. God bless you.