

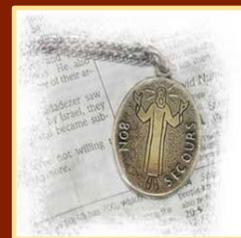
# Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation News

## Congregation of the Sisters of Bon Secours



### Ecological Spirituality & Indigenous Wisdom

August, 2022  
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*"We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the Earth;  
our very bodies are made up of her elements,  
we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters."*

*Pope Francis, Laudato Si' #2*

**August**  
**JPIC Days of Remembrance**

**August 6 and 9**  
**Anniversary of the Bombings of  
Hiroshima & Nagasaki**

**August 9**  
**International Day of the  
World's Indigenous Peoples**



**August 19**  
**World Humanitarian Day**

**August 23**  
**International Day for  
Remembrance of the  
Slave Trade & Its Abolition**

**August 29**  
**International Day  
Against Nuclear Tests**

As we continue to engage Ecological Spirituality (Goal #5 of the Laudato Si' Action Platform) our Indigenous Peoples have much wisdom to offer us. Ecological spirituality is a summons to base our spirituality on the loving awareness that we are not disconnected from the rest of creatures but joined in a splendid universal communion. As Pope Francis reminds us "our very bodies are made up of Earth's elements" and the same is true for all our non-human kin on this planet. We are all connected by God's design.

This month as we commemorate the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples we can be inspired by the profound respect for and care of creation practiced by these First Nations. Their own ecological spirituality is based on a worldview of abundance that evokes a sense of gratitude for all creation as a gift – the value of greatest priority in many Indigenous cultures. As you read this Newsletter, savor the wisdom these Indigenous people offer us. Perhaps you may find yourself desiring to embrace the values and worldview they hold so dear that enables them and us to "defend and care for all creation".



*"We are all indigenous people  
to Mother Earth...  
We are related to  
all living things.  
That's the fundamental foundation  
of the indigenous worldview."*

*Chief Phil Lane Jr.  
Ihanktonwan and Chickasaw Nations  
North America and Canada*

#### Reflection

*How does the ecological spirituality  
of your faith tradition connect with  
that of Indigenous cultures?*

*How would our relationship with  
Mother Earth be different if we honored  
the Spirit of God that is imbedded in all  
creation?*

#### Indigenous Worldview

The indigenous worldview is based in the belief that everything has a name and a spirit: Trees, rivers, the Earth, lightning, insects, rocks, animals, flowers ... everything. Each living (and even non-living) being has a personality and its own energy that it lends to the health and wholeness of the planet. When we lose one ecosystem, or one species, the totality of the planet will never be the same again.

*Source: Pachamama.org*

**Sisters of Bon Secours...Women of healing...defending and caring for all creation (Mission Focus)**

**What does the world need to hear right now?** This question was posed to indigenous leaders in interviews for the film, "Rooted Messages: Indigenous Wisdom in Times of Change". Here are the pearls of wisdom these indigenous leaders want to share with us.

"We have to restore our harmony with Mother Earth in order to enjoy a harmonious and full life. If we don't do this, we will continue to live with hatred, jealousy and sickness. But before that, Mother Earth has to forgive us for having hurt her so much."  
Don Sebastian of the Inca People in **Peru**



"Indigenous wisdom right across the planet is grounded in what we call 'law of the land' not 'law of man', and what we are saying as wisdom keepers is that unless we are factoring in indigenous wisdom, we will not be able to right-size the planet post-COVID."  
Anne Poelina of the Aboriginal people in **Australia**

"When Mother Earth gets sick, we get sick. The river, the forest and the animals – they complete our lives, and they are the reason of our existence."  
Vandria Borari of the Borari people in **Brazil**



"Mother Earth and human beings have the same purpose - to grow, to go towards an evolutionary moment. The most important thing in this life is your own self. If you take responsibility and you create the development of your own self, you're going to help not just you, you're going to help humanity."  
Carlos Barrios of the Mayan people in **Guatemala**

### The Blessing of the Indigenous Worldview

"In some Native languages the term for plants translates to "those who take care of us."

"In most Indigenous languages, we use the same words to address the living world as we use for our family. Because they are our family." (Does this remind you of St. Francis of Assisi?)

"In Indigenous ways of knowing, we understand a thing only when we understand it with all four aspects of our being: mind, body, emotion and spirit."

"In Native ways of knowing, human people are often referred to as the younger brothers and sisters of Creation. We say that humans have the least experience with how to live and thus the most to learn – we must look to our teachers among other species for guidance."

"To Indigenous People land is everything: identity, the connection to our ancestors, the home of our nonhuman kinfolk, our pharmacy, our library, the source of all that sustained us. It was a gift, not a commodity, so it could never be bought or sold."

"Many Native peoples across the world, despite myriad cultural differences, have this in common – we are rooted in cultures of gratitude."

"Knowing that you love Earth changes you, activates you to defend and protect and celebrate. But when you feel that Earth loves you in return, that feeling transforms the relationship from a one-way street into a sacred bond."

— Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*

### Reflection

*What wisdom do you find in the worldview held by our Indigenous Peoples?*

*How would your life be different and life in your country be different if we were rooted in a culture of gratitude?*

*How might the worldview of our Indigenous Peoples help us cultivate an ecological spirituality in the spirit of Laudato Si'?*

*Notice how you experience Earth loving you throughout this month.*



Source: Vatican

**"I am about to make a pilgrimage of penance, which, I hope that with the grace of God can contribute to the path of healing and reconciliation."**

### Pope Francis Visit to Indigenous Peoples of Canada

As this Newsletter is being prepared, Pope Francis is preparing for his 37<sup>th</sup> international trip as Pope to apologize to Canada's Indigenous Peoples for abuses at Catholic-run residential schools. From the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the 1970s, Catholic organizations operated up to 60% of the country's residential schools, institutions that were designed to forcibly assimilate Indigenous peoples into the country. Children attending these institutions were stripped of their Native languages and culture and forced to convert to Christianity.

**"For the deplorable conduct of ... members of the Catholic Church, I ask for God's forgiveness and I want to say to you with all my heart: I am very sorry."**

Pope Francis