

Grace Notes in Miniature

For Tuesday, May 26, 2020

Dear friends:

In rereading yesterday's GNIM, I paused over the word "iniquity" and thought how much it aligns with "inequity". That then sent me on a search of "equity"

and what it means in faith and scripture; the first name that came up was King Solomon and then there are many references to justice. I was surprised to learn that the word, "chancery" means a court of equity. As we refer to a diocesan office as the Chancery, that certainly has a strong message about where equity ought to figure in our practice as Catholic Christians.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVEyrHiSm6Y> We believe that equality comes from God, who created us with equal worth and dignity and think it important enough to teach a Grade 12 course on Equity and Social Justice¹; our Catechism of the Catholic Church contains a large section² reinforcing our belief "that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society". (USCCB). *The life and dignity of the human person is the first of our Catholic Social Justice principles. The Catechism states that* The duty of making oneself a neighbour to others and actively serving them becomes even more urgent when it involves the disadvantaged, in whatever area this may be....This same duty extends to those who think or act differently from us.³ *This is inclusive of those who*

look different from us, whether it is through race or culture, difference in ability or role. As you listen to this song, ask yourself whether we really hear and believe the words we sing...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETV1DXQk_Gk

We do a fairly good job of recognising those who are materially disadvantaged but sometimes we are dismissive of people whom we consider to be outside our circle – or are totally unaware of those we exclude. Or, going back to yesterday's definition of 'iniquity', we manage to convince ourselves that the rules are different for those we prefer not to include. Most of us have felt excluded at some point or another and we probably spent some time ruminating on the injustice of our position.

We examine such instances when we talk about bullying – and truly, excluding or dismissing anyone because we feel they are beneath us is a form of bullying. Jesus modelled inclusion and gave us very clear guidelines that

¹ <https://iceont.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Equity-Social-Justice-2013.pdf>

² https://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s1c2a3.htm

³ Ibid. 1932, 1933



we should treat everyone as we would like to be treated. He made it not just an issue of good manners but a principle of our faith: I give you a new **commandment**, (emphasis mine) that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:33-35) We may then be surprised to find that this ethic of reciprocity is common to all the major religions⁴. We can be lulled by a rather ‘smorgasbord’ approach to our faith where we decide which teachings to accept and which not: an example might be the Canadian Bishops’ response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action.⁵ You will note that our own Bishop Crosby was one of the signatories of the document referenced below. The Diocese has resources available at <https://hamiltondiocese.com/offices/justice-and-peace/resources/truthandreconciliation> and promotes the Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle <https://ourladyofguadalupecircle.ca/> a coalition of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, clerical and lay, committed to renewing and fostering relationships between our Indigenous Peoples and the Catholic Church in Canada. Here are a few articles which may be of interest: <http://jesuits.ca/news-detail?TN=NEWS-20190826033123>; <https://www.ncronline.org/news/parish/church-helps-parishioners-rediscover-and-protect-indigenous-languages>; <https://saltandlighttv.org/blogfeed/getpost.php?id=8279> We are blessed in our Board to have the service of Sherry Saevil and her assistant, Jody Harbour, to help us in our quest for knowledge. I have been fortunate to experience one of the encounter trips to Manitoulin arranged by Sherry and



it was just enough of a taste to make me hunger for more! There is much we can learn from our First Nations brothers and sisters – about care for the land, as Pope Francis reminds us, and about respect and care for each other and our elders.ⁱ This song by Marty Haugen, celebrated Christian liturgical musician/ composer, is a beautiful blend of Franciscan and Indigenous spirituality and is found in several Catholic

hymnals. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hOppUH7fCU4>

*Peace be with you, and with your spirit,
Gillian*

ⁱ Brigadier General the Venerable John Fletcher, Chaplain General of the Canadian Armed Forces, participates in a smudging ceremony with Padre (Major) Catherine Askew at his installation. Both are Anglican clergy and Maj Askew also is a member of a First Nations community.

⁴ <https://www.scarboromissions.ca/golden-rule/educational-resources>

⁵ <https://www.cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/catholic-response-call-to-action-48-2.pdf>