



AUGUST 14, 2009

MEMORY KEEPERS

Sarah Eagle Heart
PARTNER, THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Anna Saganash
MOOSONEE

TRADITIONAL TEACHING

WISDOM (MATT. 19:3-12)

WEATHER

HOT AND SUNNY AGAIN. WE ARE
BLESSED.

Bishop MacDonald honoured

In a solemn ceremony, representatives of the Nisga'a Nation presented National Indigenous Anglican Bishop Mark MacDonald with chief status and a Nisga'a name, *Kalwilimlhwahl Laxha* ("Heavenly Servant").

Senior Chief Willard Martin (killer whale clan) gave Bishop MacDonald a traditional red and white button blanket representing universal chiefdom. It depicted four of the nation's crests: killer whale, wolf, eagle, and raven. Bishop MacDonald was also given a traditional button mitre—the first of its kind—all made by Doris Tait of New Aiyansh, B.C.

This honour was first given to Archbishop Ted Scott, former Anglican Church of Canada Primate, in 1971, and passed to later Primates Peers and Hutchison.

Standing alongside Chief Martin were Chief Alan Moore (wolf clan) and two others from the Diocese of Caledonia—matriarchs Gwendolyn Adams and Camilla Haines (both of the Gitksan Nation). All were dressed in striking red and black regalia.

Senior chief Willard Martin (killer whale clan) said that the Nisga'a council of elders had been following Sacred Circle online and decided they wanted to support Bishop

Mark's ministry. When Bishop MacDonald visits Nisga'a Nation, he will be welcomed as a chief.

After the presentation the Primate prayed for Bishop MacDonald, asking God to bless his heart, eyes, lips, mind, feet and hands.

"May he know the mighty hand of your protection, your strength, your courage," prayed the Primate. "Bless the Nisga'a and bless all the nations that live in these lands."

Hello tree, goodbye fire

A healthy spruce tree affectionately known as "Fat Albert" was watered by dozens of Sacred Circle members this afternoon. The tree was planted by the 2001 Sacred Circle, and members had lugged water from home: from Inuvik, Lake Okanagan, and downtown Toronto. They circled the tree, sprinkled its branches, and marveled at the healthy legacy.

A few minutes later, down the hill, members gathered to extinguish the sacred fire, which has burned heartily all week under the watch of Elder Norm. Bishop MacDonald offered several Navajo and Ojibwe drum songs, then members lined up to pray at the dying embers.



Humility and fullness

Events of Sacred Circle's last afternoon spanned the emotional spectrum, from pain to joy.

A healing service was held in the plenary, with stations set up in the four corners for people to receive prayers from bishops, clergy, and other people gifted in healing.

One memory keeper said she was moved to hear so much crying, and to see people like the Primate hugging those who were distressed.

After a short break, Sacred Circle reconvened for the closing Eucharist, where prayers were offered for those who had recently passed away in members' communities.

The Primate, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, spoke passionately about his first experience at Sacred Circle.

"I have seen so many expressions of humility of heart and fullness of life," he said. "I have seen how much this Sacred Circle means to you. It is a time of gathering, a source of unity, a place of encouragement and mutual support in journeys of healing and self-determination."

Archbishop Hiltz summarized some main messages he heard, including the need to address non-stipendiary ministry, the reminder to minister to Indigenous Peoples in the cities, and the importance to continue discussions about new governance structures.

He observed that the governance presentations sparked much conversation. "At the heart of these conversations is relationship, not jurisdiction," he noted.

Youth encouraged and encouraging

"I spent time with the youth today, and I'm very impressed with their ideas," said one memory keeper.

She said many youth found Sacred Circle transformative, and they're already talking about how to share what they have learned.

Today the youth talking circle heard from a man whose ministry is fighting drugs in his community. His message was "Be brave and courageous. I am not, but you have to learn to face fear and have faith that God is with you."

The youth offered to pray for this man as he works in this dangerous ministry.

Words heard

"Many of us are touched by the emerging solidarity across the land."

"I love seeing the women elders here. They remind me so much of my grandmother, the one who brought me into the church."

Odds & Ends

You can say you've been at Sacred Circle 2009 if you know what to shout back to these questions:

1. Terry? Mark?
2. Satisfied?

Sacred Circle on the web

You can read, comment on, and share these daily reflections online:

<http://notes.anglican.ca/sc2009>