

My Brothers and Sisters:

Together here with you I have listened as you have told your stories of the residential schools.

I have heard the voices that have spoken of pain and hurt experienced in the schools, and of the scars which endure to this day.

I have felt shame and humiliation as I have heard of suffering inflicted by my people, and as I think of the part our church played in that suffering.

I am deeply conscious of the sacredness of the stories that you have told and I hold in the highest honour those who have told them.

I have heard with admiration the stories of people and communities who have worked at healing, and I am aware of how much healing is needed.

I also know that I am in need of healing, and my own people are in need of healing, and our church is in need of healing. Without that healing, we will continue the same attitudes that have done such damage in the Past.

I also know that healing takes a long time, both for people and for communities.

I also know that it is God who heals, and that God can begin to heal when we open ourselves, our wounds, our failures and our shame to God. I want to take one step along that path here and now.

I accept and I confess before God and you, our failures in the residential schools. We failed you. We failed ourselves. We failed God.

I am sorry, more than I can say, that we were part of a system which took you and your children from home and family.

I am sorry, more than I can say, that we tried to remake you in our image, taking from you your language and the signs of your identity.

I am sorry, more than I can say, that in our schools

so many were abused physically, sexually, culturally and emotionally.

On behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada, I present our apology.

I do this at the desire of those in the Church like the National Executive Council, who know some of your stories and have asked me to apologize.

I do this in the name of many who do not know these stories.

And I do this even though there are those in the church who cannot accept the fact that these things were done in our name.

As soon as I am home, I shall tell all the bishops what I have said, and ask them to co-operate with me and with the National Executive Council in helping this healing at the local level. Some bishops have already begun this Work.

I know how often you have heard words which have been empty because they have not been accompanied by actions. I pledge to you my best efforts, and the efforts of our church at the national level, to walk with you along the path of God's healing.

The work of the Residential Schools Working Group, the video, the commitment and the effort of the Special Assistants to the Primate for this work, the grants available for healing conferences, are some signs of that pledge, and we shall work for others.

This is Friday, the day of Jesus' suffering and death. It is the anniversary of the first atomic bomb at Hiroshima, one of the most terrible injuries ever inflicted by one people on another.

But even atomic bombs and Good Friday are not the last word. God raised Jesus from the dead as a sign that life and wholeness are the everlasting and unquenchable purpose of God.

Thank you for listening to me.

+ Michael

Archbishop and Primate

Worship for October 3, 2021

“We respectfully acknowledge that we are located in the traditional and treaty territory of the Michi Saagiig (Mississauga) and Chippewa Nations, collectively known as the Williams Treaties First Nations which include Curve Lake, Hiawatha, Alderville, Scugog Island, Rama, Beausoleil and Georgina Island First Nations,”

“We respectfully acknowledge that the Williams Treaties First Nations have been stewards and caretaker of these lands and waters, and that today remain vigilant over their health and integrity for generations to come.”

Opening:

The world belongs to God, the earth and all its people.

How good it is, how wonderful, to live together in unity.

Love and faith come together, justice and peace join hands.

If Christ's disciples keep silent, these stones would shout aloud.

Open our lips, O God, And our mouths shall proclaim your praise.

Collect:

Almighty God, you have built your church on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone. Join us together in unity of spirit by their teaching, that we may become a holy temple, acceptable to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever, Amen

Readings:

Job 1:1, 2:1-10

1:1 There was once a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job. That man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil.

2:1 One day the heavenly beings came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD.

2:2 The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the LORD, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it."

2:3 The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from evil. He still persists in his integrity, although you incited me against him, to destroy him for no reason."

2:4 Then Satan answered the LORD, "Skin for skin! All that people have they will give to save their lives.

2:5 But stretch out your hand now and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face."

2:6 The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, he is in your power; only spare his life."

2:7 So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD, and inflicted loathsome sores on Job from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

2:8 Job took a potsherd with which to scrape himself, and sat among the ashes.

2:9 Then his wife said to him, "Do you still persist in your integrity? Curse God, and die."

2:10 But he said to her, "You speak as any foolish woman would speak. Shall we receive the good at the hand of God, and not receive the bad?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

Psalm 26

26:1 Vindicate me, O LORD, for I have walked in my integrity, and I have trusted in the LORD without wavering.

26:2 Prove me, O LORD, and try me; test my heart and mind.

26:3 For your steadfast love is before my eyes, and I walk in faithfulness to you.

26:4 I do not sit with the worthless, nor do I consort with hypocrites;

26:5 I hate the company of evildoers, and will not sit with the wicked.

26:6 I wash my hands in innocence, and go around your altar, O LORD,

26:7 singing aloud a song of thanksgiving, and telling all your wondrous deeds.

26:8 O LORD, I love the house in which you dwell, and the place where your glory abides.

26:9 Do not sweep me away with sinners, nor my life with the bloodthirsty,

26:10 those in whose hands are evil devices, and whose right hands are full of bribes.

26:11 But as for me, I walk in my integrity; redeem me, and be gracious to me.

26:12 My foot stands on level ground; in the great congregation I will bless the LORD.

Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12

1:1 Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets,

1:2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds.

1:3 He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

1:4 having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

2:5 Now God did not subject the coming world, about which we are speaking, to angels.

2:6 But someone has testified somewhere, "What are human beings that you are mindful of them, or mortals, that you care for them?"

2:7 You have made them for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned them with glory and honor,

2:8 subjecting all things under their feet." Now in subjecting all things to them, God left nothing outside their control. As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to them,

2:9 but we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

2:10 It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

2:11 For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters,

2:12 saying, "I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you."

Mark 10:2-16

10:2 Some Pharisees came, and to test him they asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"

10:3 He answered them, "What did Moses command you?"

10:4 They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her."

10:5 But Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you.

10:6 But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.'

10:7 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife,

10:8 and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh.

10:9 Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

10:10 Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter.

10:11 He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her;

10:12 and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

10:13 People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them.

10:14 But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.

10:15 Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it."

10:16 And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

Sermon:

Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?

For the next number of weeks we are going to grapple with this question through the Book of Job. It is a question that lies before every generation of people. It has turned people from believing and even wondering if there is a God. The suffering of the innocent seems such an affront to God's deeply good and loved Creation. I used to wonder why my infant children would have bad dreams when all they knew was the protection of parental love. So it seems that even birth brings its own encounter with darkness. There is no question that there is evil in the world. The environment is being destroyed by greed; human life is expendable through trafficking and slavery; Indigenous people from around the world have been victims of genocide; and the most innocent of children have suffered and died by violence, political discrimination, imprisonment and the disregard for the sacredness of all human life. Indigenous children were seen as expendable because they were deemed less than human. Girl children in some cultures are being killed at birth because they are not the desired sex. Countries still use mass execution of people to control power. And what does God do in the midst of all this evil? In Job, the devil tells God that humanity will be broken by the presence of senseless suffering. And God replies, I am God and all life belongs to me.

Our scripture today has the evil one testing Job and the Pharisees testing Jesus. In the hearts of those who test, is there any real desire to understand what is good and true? All through history, good hearted Christians have set people up against the law of scripture. What does it mean to measure human value through human understanding? We are not perfect as God is perfect. The Pharisees were not making a point about the law of divorce; they were establishing their power to discredit Jesus. Jesus is making a distinction between how hard their human hearts are compared to God's creative love for all humanity. The passage from Mark has been used to reinforce God's intention for men and women to marry and a prohibition of divorce. There is in this, human telling and God telling. Humans will use this passage to condemn and God will respond by urging authentic human relationships. This is not Jesus saying only men should marry women. Men and women are intended to find human companionship and love. That is God's telling of Creation. And this is not Jesus saying divorce is wrong. In the tradition of the day, it was men wanting to put aside women without judgement. Only women could be found guilty of adultery; no woman could set aside a man. In Mark, Jesus talks about adultery as if a man could be guilty, not just a woman. And clearly Jesus points to the weakness of humanity, that they even needed to have such a law.

In other words, the human telling of creation hardens the law, and God telling frees the oppressed and cares for the poor. Human telling puts the children aside as insignificant, and God telling has Jesus lift the children up. There are too many Christian, Muslim and Judaic kingdom builders that are not God's Kingdom. It is too often the human telling that wounds the suffering soul. God's telling offers real hope, healing and reconciliation for all suffering humanity. The Psalmist speaks about living a life of integrity but is not absolutely certain how God will respond. Nevertheless, even without tangible proof, the Psalmist stands on level ground and blesses the Lord. Job does not blame God for his suffering but he does question it; as do we. How many times have I sat in a hospital ward listening to people wonder if they have done something wrong to deserve suffering. Humanity thinks maybe and God replies you are all my beloved and Jesus calls us all sisters and brothers.

It appears in the Letter to the Hebrews that Paul is being confronted about why choosing to love God and follow Jesus, should mean suffering. Why doesn't God send angels to clean up the mess in Creation? Paul points out that God came in the flesh through Jesus so humanity could find their own way through suffering and injustice. Sometimes the worst thing you can do is rescue someone from suffering. After my husband Laurie died, my children were quite young. I did many things to try and make their lives easier, to compensate for their loss. I was wrong to think that I had such ability. The truth was always in their own journey through suffering. The best I could do is walk alongside. When I represented our church at residential school hearings, the most valuable thing I did was to listen, to thank them for their courage and say I was sorry. God does not save us from above, God lives within us and all the holy people around us. It takes courage to live through suffering as individuals and communities. And it is that courage that will build resilience in order to stand firmly for hope, justice, healing and reconciliation.

Why do bad things happen to good people? Because bad things happen to all people. It takes the good people to stand on level ground and find the strength to move forward to build the creation God has always intended. Let's stop excluding people with scripture and

tests that only reflect hardened hearts. God is with us, God's telling brings light and hope. There is nothing good in suffering except the knowledge that we are not alone.

Thanks Be To God-Amen

Affirmation:

With the whole church we affirm that we are made in God's image, befriended by Christ, empowered by the Spirit.

With people everywhere we affirm God's goodness at the heart of humanity, planted more deeply than all that is wrong.

With all creation we affirm the miracle and wonder of life, the unfolding purposes of God, forever at work in ourselves and the world.

Prayers:

We bring to God

someone whom we have met or remembered today
and for whom we want to pray;

- For those facing the challenges of chronic illness; Renate, Carla, Fred, and Pat
- Those who continue to mourn the death of a spouse
- Those who are living through instability and facing challenges
- For those celebrating birthdays: Fr. Ed on Oct.3 and Jack Alma on Oct.6

We bring to God,

someone who is hurting and needs our prayer

We bring to God

a troubled situation in our world

- Victims of Residential Schools and actions of reconciliation and healing
- The Hungry and Homeless and actions for a living income and secure housing
- For the safety of children returning to school
- For the continuing challenges presented by Covid 19 and the Variants

We bring to God,

someone whom we find hard to forgive or trust

We bring ourselves to God,

that we might grow in generosity of spirit,

clarity of mind,

and the warmth of affection.

Closing responses:

O Trinity of Love,

You have been with us at the world's beginning,

BE WITH US TILL THE WORLD'S END.

You have been with us at our life's shaping,

BE WITH US AT OUR LIFE'S END.

You have been with us at the sun's rising,

BE WITH US TILL THE DAY'S END.

AMEN.

Blessing:

This is the day that God has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

We will not offer to God offerings that cost us nothing.

Go in peace to love and to serve; we will seek peace and pursue it.

In the name of the Trinity of Love,

God in Community, Holy and one. Amen