



On behalf of all the Sisters of St. Joseph of Sault Ste. Marie, it is my privilege to welcome you here today. I welcome in a special way,

- Chief Scott McLeod, representing the Nipissing First Nations, who will soon be identifying the traditional territory on which we are gathered today;
- Representatives of the federal, provincial and local governments including
 - Micheline Bedard representing our Nipissing MP, Anthony Rota
 - Vic Fedeli, our Nipissing MPP
 - Our Mayor Al McDonald and Councillor Chris Mayne,
- Representatives from various faith traditions:
 - Msgr. J.P. Jolicoeur, representing Bishop Marcel Damphousse of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie
 - Bishop Ann Germond, the Anglican Bishop of Algoma
 - Rev. Beth Hewson of the Anglican Church
 - Rev. Janie Clayton of the United Church
- In order to communicate, we have to find a way of understanding each other. Helping us with this today are
 - Anita Corriveau, who will offer French translations; and
 - Evelyn McLeod, who will offer Ojibway translations.
- The North Bay Jesuit Canoe Pilgrimage Planning Committee, coordinated by Sisters Trina Bottos, Priscilla Solomon, Sharon Miller, Pauline Guindon, and Rita Godon;
 - This committee, including Sister Winnifred McLoughlin and her staff, First Nations, Metis, Reconciliation North Bay, the larger community, and various faith traditions and organizations, worked tirelessly to ensure the logistics of this day would be attended to; and
- Finally, I welcome our Jesuit Canoe pilgrims, who landed on our Motherhouse shores yesterday evening.

Since the first posters and media announcements regarding this day were aired, I have been asked by many, “What is this day all about?” My response to these enquirers has always been the same. July 31, 2017 on the shores of Lake Nipissing at St. Joseph’s Motherhouse, marks for us a new day and a new way of being in right relationship with our Indigenous brothers and sisters.

Approximately 15 years ago, I was in Saskatoon for a meeting, and heard an advertisement on TV that stayed with me. The ad slogan stated, “We are all treaty people.” The Truth and Reconciliation Report reminded us of the ways in which many of us, as Colonial Settlers, knowingly or unknowingly, breached our treaty commitments. The hope found in the Truth and Reconciliation Report’s Call to Action, is that it did not state a list of, as they say in divorce courts, “irreconcilable differences.” The Call to Action invited us to move to finding new ways of being in relationship, of establishing, not a treaty, but a covenant relationship, built on equality, friendship, and trust, recognizing that only in sharing diverse gifts and diverse perspective, will we together, be able to create a new shared future, full of hope.

As Sisters of St. Joseph of Sault Ste. Marie, we join with our paddler friends, the people gathered here, our Indigenous brothers and sisters, and all Canadians:

- To commit to building “right relationships” with all peoples and all nations;
- To remember that “right relationships” are built on acknowledging our equality as members of the human family; and
- To support and care for each other and for our earth in ways that respects the unique gifts the Creator has given to all of us.

I offer this tobacco to Chief McLeod to mark this moment in our history, as together we commit to building relationships of friendship, trust and support. Meegwich.

Thank you.

Sister Bonnie MacLellan, csj

General Superior

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