

DECEMBER 6, 1992
HOMILY BY ARCHBISHOP OF HALIFAX AUSTIN E. BURKE

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT Scripture Passages: ISAIAH 11:, ROMANS 15:, MATTHEW 3:

ST. CATHERINE'S, MICMAC, N.S.

I WANT TO TELL YOU HOW VERY HAPPY I AM TO BE HERE WITH YOU AT ST. CATHERINE'S THIS MORNING. YOU ARE VERY DEAR TO ME AND I KEEP YOU IN MY PRAYERS. I HAVE ASKED THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR THE GIFT OF WISDOM TO SPEAK WITH YOU TODAY.

THIS MORNING IN THE SCRIPTURES WE HAVE HEARD, WE MEET JOHN THE BAPTIST, COMING FROM THE WILDERNESS, PROCLAIMING GOD'S KINGDOM. JOHN THE BAPTIST WAS SENT FROM GOD. HIS RESPONSIBILITY WAS CLEAR: "PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT." THAT IS WHAT THE CHURCH HAS BEEN TRYING TO DO EVER SINCE.

GOD TAKES TREMENDOUS RISKS, YOU KNOW. WE COULD SAY GOD IS THE ORIGINAL GAMBLER. THE WORK OF SALVATION WAS ACCOMPLISHED IN HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST, AND GOD LEAVES PROCLAMATION OF THAT WONDERFUL NEWS TO US.

AND WE ARE NOT PERFECT. WE CAN WONDER ABOUT WHY GOD PLANNED IT THIS WAY.

IN THIS ADVENT SEASON, WE ARE PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS, WHEN WE WELCOME THE CHRISTCHILD. WE KNOW THAT CHILDREN ARE FRAGILE, POWERLESS, THEY NEED OUR PROTECTION AND OUR SUPPORT, AND YET THE ALL-POWERFUL GOD CHOSE TO COME AMONG US AS AN INFANT.

IN EVERY EUCHARIST WE RECALL THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS CHRIST WHEN THE WORLD DID ITS VERY WORST TO THE SON OF GOD. YET IN THE SAME BREATH WE REMEMBER THE RESURRECTION, WHEN GOD DID HIS VERY BEST FOR THE WORLD.

YES, WE CAN CERTAINLY WONDER WHY GOD PLANNED IT THIS WAY. BUT THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT IT IS GOD'S PLAN FOR US AND FOR OUR WORLD.

SO HERE WE ARE TODAY, THE ONES WHO ARE CALLED TO MAKE STRAIGHT THE PATHS. ALL OF US IN THIS CHURCH ARE CALLED TO PROCLAIM THE KINGDOM OF GOD. THE KINGDOM IS DESCRIBED IN THE WONDERFUL POETRY OF THE FIRST READING FROM SAIAH.

"THE WOLF SHALL LIVE WITH THE LAMB, THE LEOPARD SHALL LIE DOWN WITH THE KID, THE CALF AND THE LION AND THE FATLING TOGETHER, AND A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM. THE COW AND THE BEAR SHALL GRAZE, THEIR YOUNG SHALL LIE DOWN TOGETHER AND THE LION SHALL EAT STRAW LIKE THE OX. THE NURSING CHILD SHALL PLAY OVER THE HOLE OF THE ASP. THE WEANED CHILD SHALL PUT ITS HAND ON THE ADDER'S DEN . THEY WILL NOT HURT OR DESTROY ON ALL MY HOLY MOUNTAIN: FOR THE EARTH WILL BE FULL OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD AS THE WATERS COVER THE SEA. "

DOESN'T THIS TELL US OF PEACE AND GOODNESS? ISN'T THIS THE WORLD WE ALL WANT?

PROCLAIMING THIS GLORIOUS VISION IS IMPORTANT WORK, THE MOST IMPORTANT WORK WE CAN DO. WE MUST DO THIS DAILY, WHOEVER WE ARE, CHILD, PARENT, ELDER, PRIEST, NATIVE OR NON-NATIVE. WE MUST PROCLAIM THE KINGDOM WITH OUR LIVES, WHATEVER WE DO EVERY DAY.

THE PROBLEM IS THAT OUR IDEA OF THE KINGDOM IS COLOURED BY OUR HISTORY AND OUR UPBRINGING AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF OUR LIVES. WE CAN GET CONFUSED. IT IS THE

WAY OF THE LORD WE ARE TO MAKE STRAIGHT, NOT WHAT WE DON'T LIKE OR UNDERSTAND IN OTHER PEOPLE.

THE GOD WHO CAME TO US AT BETHLEHEM CAME AS A HUMAN BEING, AND EACH HUMAN BEING IS TIED TO A LANGUAGE, A LAND, A FAMILY, A CULTURE, A TRADITION, AND A LONG HISTORY. THAT IS WHAT INCARNATION IS! THAT IS WHAT WE CELEBRATE AT CHRISTMAS. CHRIST CAME TO BE ONE OF US. AND WHEN WE PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL, WE PROCLAIM IT ACCORDING TO A LANGUAGE AND TRADITION AND HISTORY. THIS IS THE RISK GOD TAKES WITH US.

GOD HAS BEEN ENTRUSTING THE PROCLAMATION OF SALVATION TO PEOPLE FOR A LONG TIME. AND IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A GAMBLE. THE PHARISEES AND THE SADDUCEES IN TODAY'S GOSPEL ARE A FINE EXAMPLE OF PEOPLE WHO WANTED TO REMAKE THE WORLD ACCORDING TO THEIR OWN IDEAS. THE PHARISEES DEMANDED STRICT OBEDIENCE TO A RIGID CODE OF BEHAVIOUR, AS A SIGN OF HOLINESS.

IN PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS WE HEAR OF MORE DISAGREEMENTS. PAUL PRAYS: "MAY THE GOD OF STEADFASTNESS AND ENCOURAGEMENT GRANT YOU TO LIVE IN HARMONY WITH ONE ANOTHER. " THAT TELLS US THEY WERE NOT LIVING IN HARMONY. THERE WERE PROBLEMS IN THE ROMAN COMMUNITY WITH JEWISH CHRISTIANS AND GENTILE CHRISTIANS WHO COULD NOT ACCEPT EACH OTHER. THEY HAD TWO DIFFERENT IDEAS OF THE 'STRAIGHT PATH'. THEY WANTED TO STRAIGHTEN EACH OTHER OUT.

WHEN WE LOOK AT THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH THROUGH THE CENTURIES, WE CONTINUE TO FIND THE SAME STORY. IN THE EARLY CENTURIES, THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL WAS CARRIED THROUGHOUT THE ROMAN EMPIRE, AND WE FIND MANY TRACES OF THIS EARLY ROMAN INFLUENCE IN OUR PRACTICES TODAY.

THE GOSPEL WAS BROUGHT TO NORTH AMERICA BY WHITE EUROPEANS, WITH THE BLESSING OF GOVERNMENT, AND THE CHURCH THAT WAS ESTABLISHED CARRIED THE LANGUAGES AND TRADITIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THOSE PEOPLE.

MISTAKES WERE MADE. PEOPLE HAVE SUFFERED. THE STRAIGHT PATH HAS BEEN DESCRIBED IN MANY WAYS. THE CHURCH IS MADE UP OF PEOPLE WHO ARE SINFUL, EVEN THOUGH WE ARE REDEEMED. WE HAVE NOT ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GOSPEL AND CULTURE. WE HAVE CONFUSED LANGUAGE AND FAITH. THIS HAPPENED WITH ALL GROUPS. IT IS PART OF THE PAIN OF THE HISTORY WE SHARE.

I AM AN ACADIAN. THE LANGUAGE OF MY HOME IS FRENCH. MY PEOPLE HAVE LIVED IN THIS LAND SINCE 1500'S. THERE WAS A TIME WHEN FRENCH COULD NOT BE SPOKEN IN THE SCHOOLS OR THE CHURCHES OF THIS LAND. IN MANY FAMILIES, THE LANGUAGE WAS NOT PASSED ON TO THE CHILDREN. THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE ABOUT MAKING A STRAIGHT PATH.

IN CAPE BRETON, THE STORY OF THE BREAKING OF THE FIDDLES IS OFTEN TOLD. ANYONE WHO HAS EVER BEEN TO CAPE BRETON KNOWS THAT THE FIDDLE SINGS THE SONGS OF THE ISLAND. AND YET THE FIDDLES WERE FORBIDDEN IN THE CHURCHES. THEY WERE BROKEN SO THEY COULD NOT BE PLAYED. THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE ABOUT MAKING A STRAIGHT PATH.

YOU TELL THE STORIES OF THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL. YOU WERE NOT ALLOWED TO SPEAK YOUR LANGUAGE, TO WEAR YOUR CLOTHES, OR TO PLAY YOUR MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS. THIS TOO WAS SUPPOSED TO BE ABOUT MAKING A STRAIGHT PATH.

WE CAN SEE NOW THAT THIS WAS WRONG. THE STRAIGHT PATH IS NOT ABOUT CORRECT LANGUAGE OR PERFECT POSTURE OR SPECIAL MUSIC. THE GOOD NEWS IS ABOUT THE GOD WHO CREATED US IN INFINITE VARIETY, WITH A GREAT NUMBER OF BEAUTIFUL LANGUAGES. WE ARE MADE WITH A MARVELOUS CAPACITY FOR SHARING THE BEAUTY OF CREATION THROUGH OUR MUSIC AND OUR ART AND OUR STORYTELLING. OUR FAMILY AND OUR TRADITION ARE PART OF GOD'S GREAT GIFT TO US. WE ARE NOT TO BE SEPARATED FROM OUR ROOTS.

POPE JOHN PAUL II, IN HIS ADDRESS TO THE NATIVE PEOPLE OF NEW ZEALAND, SPOKE SOME WORDS WHICH RING TRUE HERE TODAY: "THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST SPEAKS ALL LANGUAGES. IT ESTEEMS AND EMBRACES ALL CULTURES. IT SUPPORTS THEM IN EVERYTHING HUMAN AND, WHEN NECESSARY, IT PURIFIES THEM. ALWAYS AND EVERYWHERE THE GOSPEL UPLIFTS AND ENRICHES CULTURES WITH THE REVEALED MESSAGE OF A LOVING AND MERCIFUL GOD. ... AS YOU LISTEN TO THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, SEEK OUT THE BEST THINGS OF YOUR TRADITIONAL WAYS. IF YOU DO, YOU WILL COME TO REALIZE MORE AND MORE YOUR GREAT HUMAN AND CHRISTIAN DIGNITY. LET YOUR MINDS AND HEARTS BE STRENGTHENED TO BEGIN A NEW LIFE NOW. "

LET US FOLLOW THE WISE COUNSEL OF OUR HOLY FATHER. LET US TRUST EACH OTHER, SHARE OUR GIFTS AND BROADEN OUR PATHS, SO THAT WE MAY LEARN TO FIND THE LORD IN EACH OTHER.

I CANNOT CHANGE THE PAST. I CANNOT ERASE THE DAMAGE THAT HAS BEEN DONE. I CAN EXPRESS MY OWN SORROW, AND THE SORROW OF YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN OUR CHURCH OF HALIFAX, FOR YOUR SUFFERING. I APOLOGIZE FOR WHATEVER PAIN THE CHURCH ITSELF MAY HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR CAUSING IN THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL.. THE CHURCH IS NOT MEANT TO HURT, BUT TO HEAL – AND I MUST SAY THAT I AM TRULY SORRY IF PEOPLE CAUSED SOME LINGERING HURTS IN THE NAME OF THE CHURCH.

LET US LEARN FROM TODAY'S GOSPEL, TO "BEAR FRUIT WORTHY OF REPENTANCE." HEALING COMES WITH HONESTY AND TRUTH, EXPERIENCED IN DIALOGUES OF MUTUALITY. THE CHURCH OF HALIFAX AND THE MI'KMAQ PEOPLE ARE A PART OF EACH OTHER. WE HAVE BEEN BONDED TO EACH OTHER FOR MANY YEARS. OUR PARTNERSHIP HAS WEATHERED MANY STORMS.

WE REJOICE WITH YOU IN THE PUBLICATION OF THE BOOK OF MI'KMAQ PRAYERS. THE ARCHDIOCESE AND THE SISTERS OF CHARITY WERE PLEASED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE COSTS OF PREPARING THIS MATERIAL FOR PUBLICATION AND DISTRIBUTION.

IN THE REPORT ON FUTURE PASTORAL LEADERSHIP IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF HALIFAX, OUR TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THAT "NEW MODELS OF PASTORAL LEADERSHIP WHICH ARE CONSISTENT WITH THEIR CULTURE AND TRADITIONS BE DEVELOPED AMONG THE MI'KMAQ PEOPLE." WE CAN ONLY DO THAT IN DIALOGUE WITH THE PEOPLE OF THIS COMMUNITY. WE MUST DO THAT WORK TOGETHER.

THE CHURCH IS ALWAYS GROWING AND CHANGING, AND WE BELIEVE THE SPIRIT LEADS US IN THIS LIFE. THE RISK THAT GOD HAS TAKEN IS TO ENTRUST SINFUL HUMAN BEINGS WITH THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOOD NEWS, AND IN OUR SINFULNESS AND OUR FRAILTY, WE HURT EACH OTHER. BUT BECAUSE THE LORD NEVER ABANDONS US, WE ALWAYS HAVE ANOTHER DAY IN WHICH TO CARE FOR EACH OTHER, UNTIL WE ALL COME TO THE HOLY MOUNTAIN WHERE THERE WILL BE NO MORE HURT OR DESTRUCTION AND WE WILL BE WITH THE LORD FOREVER AND EVER. MAY GOD BE WITH US AS WE WORK TOGETHER TO THAT END.

HOMILY BY ARCHBISHOP OF HALIFAX AUSTIN E. BURKE
SACRED HEART CHURCH MILLBROOK RESERVATION

FEBRUARY 14, 1993

SCRIPTURES: SIRACH 15: 16-21, PSALM 118, 1 COR. 2: 6-10, MATTHEW 5: 17-37

TODAY WE HAVE ONE OF THOSE FAMILIAR GOSPEL PASSAGES, ONE WHICH HAS BEEN USED IN ALL KINDS OF ARGUMENTS. WHEN QUESTIONS COME UP ABOUT DIVORCE, ABOUT SWEARING OATHS, ABOUT THE LAW COURTS, WE HEAR SOME VERSION OF THIS GOSPEL PASSAGE QUOTED. THAT IS A REAL DANGER WITH THE BIBLE - PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO USE JUST THE PART THEY WANT OR NEED TO WIN AN ARGUMENT OR MAKE A POINT, OR GAIN POWER OVER OTHERS. THAT'S WRONG. GOD'S WORD IS NOT GIVEN TO US TO PROVIDE MATERIAL FOR WINNING ARGUMENTS. GOD'S WORD IS GIVEN TO US TO BE THE VERY FOOD OF LIFE, TO LEAD US TO ETERNAL LIFE.

TODAY'S GOSPEL IS A PART OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT, WHEN JESUS GATHERED HIS DISCIPLES ABOUT HIM AND TAUGHT THEM ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. WE HAVE READ PARTS OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT FOR TWO WEEKS NOW. FIRST WE HEARD THE BEATITUDES THEN WE HEARD ABOUT SALT AND LIGHT. WE WILL HEAR ANOTHER PART OF IT NEXT WEEK. JESUS IS TELLING WHAT IT IS LIKE IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN ... AND HE IS INVITING US TO LIVE LIKE THE PEOPLE OF THAT KINGDOM.

SO WHAT DOES THIS GOSPEL HAVE TO SAY IN OUR LIVES, TO OUR SITUATION HERE TODAY AT SACRED HEART CHURCH AT THE MILLBROOK RESERVE? THAT IS ALWAYS THE QUESTION WE MUST ASK OF THE SCRIPTURES.

THERE ARE MANY OTHER QUESTIONS WE MAY ASK, BUT THE ONE WE ABSOLUTELY MUST ASK IF WE ARE TO BE THE PEOPLE OF GOD IS "SO WHAT? WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES THIS GOSPEL MAKE FOR THIS COMMUNITY GATHERED HERE? WHAT GOOD NEWS IS HERE FOR US?"

THE GOOD NEWS HERE IS THAT WHAT WE HEARD IN THE PAST IS NOW TO BE CHANGED. THE GOOD NEWS HERE IS THAT THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS A PLACE OF JUSTICE, OF MERCY, OF WHOLENESS, OF HEALING, OF RECONCILIATION. AND WE ARE CALLED TO BE THE PEOPLE OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. NOT AFTER WE DIE, BUT HERE AND NOW.

ISN'T THAT EXACTLY THE WORLD WE HOPE FOR?

AND ALL OF THIS IS POSSIBLE BECAUSE JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF MADE IT POSSIBLE. JESUS CAME TO LIVE AMONG US. SHOWING US HOW WE ARE TO CARE FOR EACH OTHER, HOW WE ARE TO RECONCILE OUR DIFFERENCES, HOW WE ARE TO RESPOND TO INJUSTICE. AND GOD GIVES US THE GRACE WE NEED TO ACT AS PEOPLE OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

THAT IS WHAT WE LEARN IN THE FIRST READING FROM THE BOOK OF SIRACH. "IF YOU CHOOSE, YOU CAN KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS, AND TO ACT FAITHFULLY IS A MATTER OF YOUR OWN CHOICE."

IT IS OFTEN SAID WE ONLY USE A SMALL PORTION OF OUR BRAIN. A MORE IMPORTANT TRUTH IS THAT WE ONLY TOUCH A SMALL PART OF THE GRACE GOD HAS POURED OUT FOR US.

ST. PAUL TELLS US THAT "NO EYE HAS SEEN, NOR EAR HEARD, NOR THE HUMAN HEART CONCEIVED WHAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM." GOD'S GRACE IS ABUNDANT AND NEVER-ENDING, IT IS POURED OUT GENEROUSLY FOR US. AND AS WE SEEK TO LIVE AS PEOPLE OF THE KINGDOM, WE LIVE WITH THAT GRACE. WE WILL NOT HAVE PEACE, JUSTICE, RECONCILIATION OR HEALING WITHOUT GRACE.

IN A VERY SPECIAL WAY, HERE TODAY, WE MUST IMPLORE GOD'S GRACE FOR PEACEMAKING AMONG US. THE GOSPEL SAYS: "WHEN YOU ARE OFFERING YOUR GIFT AT THE ALTAR, IF YOU REMEMBER THAT YOUR BROTHER OR SISTER HAS SOMETHING AGAINST YOU, LEAVE YOUR GIFT BEFORE THE ALTAR AND GO: FIRST BE RECONCILED TO YOUR BROTHER OR SISTER, AND THEN COME AND OFFER YOUR GIFT."

JESUS IS SPEAKING OF BEING RECONCILED WITH BROTHERS AND SISTERS. WE NEED TO BE RECONCILED AMONG OURSELVES HERE

SEVERAL TIMES IN THE GOSPEL TODAY WE HEAR: "YOU HAVE HEARD THAT IT WAS SAID TO THOSE OF ANCIENT TIMES... BUT I SAY TO YOU."

JESUS REFERS TO THE ANCIENT LAW CODES OF THE HEBREW PEOPLE. HE IS TELLING THE PEOPLE LISTENING TO HIM ON THAT MOUNTAIN THAT THESE ARE NEW TIMES AND THEY ARE NEW PEOPLE AND THEY MUST FOLLOW A NEW CODE OF BEHAVIOUR, THE WAY OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

IN THE LIGHT OF TODAY'S WORLD, AS SO MANY PEOPLE ARE CLAIMING THEIR DIGNITY AND THEIR RIGHTS AS VALUABLE HUMAN BEINGS, WE MUST SPEAK OF WHAT WAS SAID IN OUR ANCIENT TIMES, AND THEN WE MUST LISTEN TO THE NEW WORDS THE LORD SPEAKS TO US.

WE CAN SEE THAT MUCH THAT HAPPENED IN THE PAST WAS WRONG. IN NORTH AMERICA, WHITE EUROPEAN SETTLERS BROUGHT THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST. THAT GOSPEL WAS PRESENTED IN THEIR LANGUAGE, FILTERED THROUGH THEIR TRADITIONS AND CULTURE. THE GOVERNMENTS THEY ESTABLISHED SUPPORTED ALL OF THAT. THIS HAS LED TO INJUSTICE FOR MANY PEOPLE.

BUT THE FACT THAT WE ARE HERE TODAY TELLS US THE GOOD NEWS, THAT THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST IS STRONGER AND MORE POWERFUL THAN CULTURE OR LANGUAGE OR OPPRESSION OR POLITICS OR ANY EVIL..

I AM AN ACADIAN. MY PEOPLE HAVE LIVED IN THIS LAND SINCE THE 1500'S. AT ONE TIME, THE ACADIANS WERE EXPELLED FROM THEIR HOMES, CHILDREN AND PARENTS WERE SEPARATED, AND THEIR WAY OF LIFE WAS COMPLETELY DESTROYED. THERE WAS A TIME WHEN FRENCH COULD NOT BE SPOKEN IN THE SCHOOLS OR THE CHURCHES. TODAY WE CAN WE SEE THAT THIS WAS WRONG.

IN PAST TIMES IN NOVA SCOTIA THE NATIVE PEOPLE HAVE NOT ALWAYS BEEN RESPECTED. YOUR LANGUAGE WAS TAKEN FROM YOU, YOUR WAY OF LIFE WAS ALTERED, AND YOUR FAMILIES WERE DISRUPTED. STORIES ARE TOLD OF THE PAIN AND SORROW SOME PEOPLE SUFFERED IN THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL. IN THE LIGHT OF TODAY'S WORLD, WE CAN SEE THAT THIS WAS WRONG.

IN DECEMBER I WAS ABLE TO VISIT WITH THE PEOPLE OF ST. CATHERINE'S PARISH IN INDIAN BROOK. WHILE THERE I EXPRESSED TO THEM MY SORROW, AND THE SORROW OF THEIR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN THE CHURCH OF HALIFAX, FOR ANY SUFFERING CAUSED BY PEOPLE WORKING IN THE NAME OF THE CHURCH.

THESE ARE THE WORDS I SAID TO THEM: "THE CHURCH IS NOT MEANT TO HURT BUT TO HEAL

- AND I AM TRULY SORRY IF PEOPLE CAUSED SOME LINGERING HURTS IN THE NAME OF THE CHURCH."

I HAVE COME TODAY TO MILLBROOK TO SAY THE SAME TO YOU. I CANNOT CHANGE THE PAST. I CANNOT ERASE ANY DAMAGE THAT HAS BEEN DONE. I CAN ONLY EXPRESS SORROW AND PRAY THAT THE GRACE OF RECONCILIATION WILL BE GIVEN TO US. IN THE LIGHT OF TODAY'S GOSPEL, WE CAN SEE THAT WE ARE CALLED TO BE RECONCILED TO EACH OTHER

RECONCILIATION AND HEALING COME TOGETHER. THEY COME WITH HONESTY AND TRUTH AND RESPECT FOR EACH OTHER. THEY COME WHEN WE SIT DOWN TO TALK WITH EACH OTHER. THEY COME WHEN WE AGREE TO LISTEN TO EACH OTHER. HEALING AND RECONCILIATION ARE PART OF THE GOOD NEWS OF THE KINGDOM. WE CANNOT DO THIS ALONE. WE CAN ONLY COME TO FULL LIFE WHEN WE PARTICIPATE IN THE LIFE OF GOD. TOGETHER WE MUST DISCOVER WHAT THIS CAN MEAN FOR US.

IN THE REPORT ON FUTURE PASTORAL LEADERSHIP IN THE ARCHDIOCESE, OUR TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THAT NEW MODELS OF PASTORAL LEADERSHIP WHICH ARE CONSISTENT WITH THEIR CULTURE AND TRADITIONS BE DEVELOPED AMONG THE MI'KMAQ PEOPLE. WE MUST WORK TOGETHER TO DISCOVER THESE NEW MODELS. WE HAVE TO LEARN FROM EACH OTHER.

THE CHURCH OF HALIFAX AND THE MI'KMAQ PEOPLE ARE PART OF EACH OTHER. WE HAVE BEEN BONDED TO EACH OTHER FOR MANY YEARS. OUR PARTNERSHIP HAS WEATHERED MANY STORMS. WE WILL GO ON LEARNING HOW TO LIVE AS GOD'S PEOPLE, THE PEOPLE WHO HEAR THE GOOD NEWS. AND WE WILL RELY ON GOD'S GRACE TO LEAD US.