

NOVEMBER 16, 2017

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### Editor's Note

Dear JPIC Ontario Members,

**Please join us in Kingston (November 22 - 23)** for this year's **JPIC Ontario** and meeting.

Guest speaker, **His Honourable Graydon Nicholas, former Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick**, will present the aims of the **Guadalupe Circle** and their efforts towards reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

Registration forms have been sent with the poster. If you did not receive it, please contact me and I'll forward you the registration package.

Looking forward to rich exchanges on this and other important issues!

Peace,

**Apraham Niziblian**

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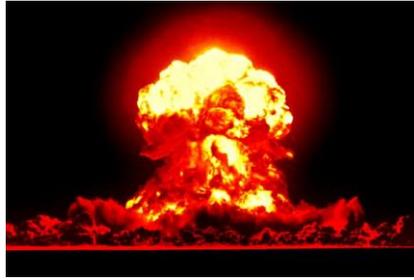
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## PEACE

### Nuclear Weapons in the Spotlight!



History was made at the United Nations on July 7 when 122 countries voted in favour of an important new treaty that promises to greatly advance the prospect of ridding the world of nuclear weapons. For its efforts in bringing about this historical achievement the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) won the 2017 Nobel Peace

Prize. ICAN is a coalition of non-governmental organizations in one hundred countries. Pax Christi International, as well as its member organisations around the world, is part of the campaign, participating in national and international advocacy with governments and involving national and international church leaders.

The “Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty,” prohibits states from developing, testing, producing, manufacturing, transferring, possessing, stockpiling, using or threatening to use nuclear weapons. It also prohibits them from assisting, encouraging or inducing anyone to engage in any of those activities. In addition, states must not allow nuclear weapons to be stationed or deployed on their territory.

The National Catholic Reporter featured quotes from several women religious in their article on the subject:

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/world/organization-working-abolish-nuclear-weapons-awarded-nobel-peace-prize>

According to the Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (CNANW), the Canadian government’s resistance is out of step with its historic policy of supporting disarmament efforts, a role endorsed widely by Canadians. Once known for its global leadership on disarmament, Canada remains outside the first major advancement on nuclear disarmament in a generation.

Unfortunately, at the urging of the United States, Canada joined other NATO members (except the Netherlands) in opposing the negotiations, and when they eventually proceeded, Canada boycotted the meetings. Read this article in the Hill Times by Cesar Jaramillo, Executive Director of Project Ploughshares:

<https://www.hilltimes.com/2017/07/19/nuclear-weapons-ban-thing-not-going-away-prime-minister/114220>

Sign the petition from CNANW asking Canada to sign the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty: <https://actionsprout.io/0536EB>

For more information, you can read this opinion piece in the Toronto Star by Hiroshima Survivor Setsuko Thurlow:

<https://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2017/07/26/canada-needs-embrace-peace-and-sign-nuclear-ban-treaty.html>

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## POVERTY



### Surprising Statistics about poverty in Canada

As a wealthy country with an abundance of natural resources, it may come as a shock that Canada suffers greatly from poverty. Women and children are the two major groups affected by poverty in Canada, as a result of unemployment and other barriers that stand in the way of financial stability.

1. According to the national report “Let’s End Child Poverty for Good,” the rate of child poverty in Canada increased from 15.8 percent in 1989 to 19 percent in 2013. Campaign 2000, a nonpartisan network of 120 organizations against child and family poverty, works with the federal government on the Canada Child Benefit, which will hopefully reduce child poverty by 50 percent in the next few years. <sup>1</sup>
2. Child poverty rates are nearly double for indigenous children and new immigrant families, at 40 percent. One in seven Canadian children resides in a homeless shelter, which are environments that can lead to higher rates of mental and physical health issues.<sup>2</sup>
3. One in seven Canadian children resides in a homeless shelter, which are environments that can lead to higher rates of mental and physical health issues.<sup>3</sup>
4. Compared to other developed countries, Canada’s poverty rate is higher than most, ranking 23 out of 34 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries.<sup>4</sup>
5. Mothers raise their children in poverty. The Canadian Women’s Foundation works to advance women’s conditions by finding ways out of poverty and helping them build a solid foundation that includes stable housing, childcare and employment skills.<sup>5</sup>
6. The child poverty rate is highest in Toronto at 27 percent; Montreal follows with 25 percent. <sup>6</sup>

"Something  
must be  
done to  
save  
humanity!  
A better  
world is  
possible!"

*Fidel Castro*

<sup>1</sup> <https://borgenproject.org/poverty-in-canada>

<sup>2</sup> <https://borgenproject.org/poverty-in-canada>

<sup>3</sup> <https://borgenproject.org/poverty-in-canada>

<sup>4</sup> <https://borgenproject.org/poverty-in-canada>

<sup>5</sup> <https://borgenproject.org/poverty-in-canada>

<sup>6</sup> <https://borgenproject.org/poverty-in-canada>

**“We cannot wait any longer to deal with the structural causes of poverty, in order to heal our society from an illness that can only lead to new crisis.”**

*Pope Francis*

7. Two hundred thousand people are homeless in a year, costing the Canadian Government 7 billion dollars <sup>7</sup>
8. Homeless kids come from every part of the country and every background. “About 40 percent of the homeless youth we see come from middle and upper income families. In a recent study of homeless youth, 40 percent were under 16 when they first experienced homelessness.”<sup>8</sup>

Poverty in Canada is a significant issue, but not one that is impossible to solve. Various organizations have helped those with major setbacks return to normalcy, to the point where they can live sustainable lives and provide for their families. WHAT CAN WE DO?

Further reading: We’re still waiting for action on Poverty in Canada (by Joe Gunn): <http://bit.ly/2ytEPil>

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<sup>7</sup> <https://borgenproject.org/poverty-in-canada>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.covenanthousetoronto.ca/homeless-youth/Youth-Homelessness>

## INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

### Reconciliation: A journey together



*Roman Catholic - Indigenous Elders Dialogue* took place in Saskatoon in 2011. A significant part of this conference has always been the opportunity for participants to be out on the land. That is where Indigenous Peoples find our closest connections with the created world around us, from which we draw strength, identity and teachings. Our Mother Earth, with her myriad forms of life always offers us some new understanding of ourselves. We visited a rock shaped by nature like the head of a buffalo. It is sacred to the Cree people there. A strong wind and the sudden bursting of a cloud with its heavy downpour did not deter us from offering our tobacco, praying and hearing the story of that sacred site.

As we left the sacred rock and wound our way uphill, Harry Lafond, a Cree leader, took this photo of the group. With his permission, I use it to highlight the reality we face in the reconciliation process in Canada. We face a long, uphill journey. The path, narrow at times, bears the footprints of our Indigenous ancestors. It is striking that at one point this path intersects with some very clear traces of an old wagon trail used by peoples of Settler and Immigrant origins. Recognizing that the old wagon trail would have taken us in a different direction, no one followed it. On that day, this small group of Indigenous and Settler-origin people walked the path in unity. That is how we are called to walk the path of reconciliation. Today, Indigenous Peoples are calling on all Canadians to recognize the treaty path as it was envisioned by Indigenous partners in that process. We are called to honour the treaties. They have not been honoured in the past. We need to recognize that we are all treaty people. We are all bound by the treaties so we must ensure that all unjust interpretations of them, and subsequent practices are no longer acceptable.

Recently, I witnessed two such occasions, two events where at least small steps were taken. I participated in the Roman Catholic -Lutheran Dialogue commemoration of the Lutheran Reformation: Nord500North in Sudbury, Ontario. The initiators of the conference opened it up, not only ecumenically, but also to incorporate reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous leadership was an integral part of the conference.

On Sept 28, I listened to the Honourable Mélanie Joly, the Canadian Heritage Minister, introduce the government's proposed legislative changes regarding Canadian cultural content in the media. She began with the acknowledgement that she, and all present, were on the unceded traditional territory of the Algonquian Peoples- a step in the right direction. She also acknowledged that Indigenous Peoples were here long before Settlers arrived. It may seem a small step, but it does make Canadians aware that the story of this land and its peoples did not begin in the sixteenth century. It will take many more small steps such as these, but we can make the needed change if we work together.

**“Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding.”**

*Martin Luther King, Jr.*

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## ENVIRONMENT



### Let us embrace this harvest season and *Give Thanks*.

Let us *give thanks* for the TransCanada Corporation's news release on October 5<sup>th</sup> where they announced that they will no longer proceed with the Energy East Pipeline and the Eastern Mainline project. This was due in part to the National Energy Board's decision to consider greenhouse gas emissions in reviewing the pipeline proposal. Environmental groups and individuals across Canada have worked for many years, planting seeds, to change policies around approval processes for mining and extracting projects.

Let us *give thanks* to all the grassroots organizations and individuals who have taken to the courts to protect the environment. Today, New Zealand's Whanganui River is a person under domestic law. India's Ganges River has been granted human rights. In Ecuador, the Constitution enshrines nature's "right to integral respect". In Canada, our Minister of the Environment, Catherine McKenna, is feeling the push to get stronger environmental rights into federal law.

Let us *give thanks* to academics who are teaching young people about the new cosmology and Teilhard de Chardin. I've been attending "partnership" meetings for the E4A program with York University, McGill University and the University of Vermont since 2012. When I hear the students speak and feel their commitment to a better world I am renewed with a sense of possibilities. See: <https://e4a-net.org>.

**Giving thanks** doesn't have to be restricted to Thanksgiving. Whenever you feel like you're drowning in negative news on the environment, from "Trump-Land", reading about biodiversity loss, etc., then you may want to read these "good news" websites. And **Give Thanks** throughout the year!

<https://www.positive.news/2017/environment/27164/citizen-led-legal-action-climate-change-peaks>

<http://www.ijdesign.com/blog>

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## ANTI-TRAFFICKING INITIATIVES

### Anti-Human Trafficking: Ontario's Strategy to End Human Trafficking



The Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS), in partnership with the Ministry of the Status of Women and other affected ministries, is leading the implementation of Ontario's Strategy to End Human Trafficking, including the establishment of a Provincial Anti-Human Trafficking Coordination Office. Ontario's Strategy to End Human Trafficking aims to ensure that everyone in the province can live in safety -- free from the threat, fear or experience of exploitation and violence.

### Key Elements of Ontario's Strategy to End Human Trafficking

The new Strategy to End Human Trafficking focuses on four areas of action:

- **Prevention and Community Supports** that will increase awareness and understanding of the causes of human trafficking, and improve community services like housing, mental health services, trauma counselling, and job skills training to meet the immediate and long-term needs of survivors.
- **Enhanced Justice Sector Initiatives** that will support effective intelligence-gathering and identification, investigation and prosecution of human trafficking.
- **Indigenous-Led Approaches** that will support culturally relevant services and responses -- designed, developed, and delivered jointly with Indigenous partners.
- **Provincial Coordination and Leadership**, including the development of a provincial Anti-Human Trafficking Coordination Office to help improve collaboration across law enforcement, justice, social, health, education, and child welfare sectors.

According to the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), child marriage is "*perhaps the most prevalent form of sexual abuse and exploitation of girls,*" and "*marriage before the age of 18 is a fundamental violation of human rights.*" About 15 million girls around the world are married before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthdays each year – or about 40,000 per day, according to the *International Centre for Research on Women*.

In South east Asia, sisters from several countries are working towards one common goal: to fight human trafficking. Through the creation and development of Asian Movement of Women Religious Against Human Trafficking (AMRAT) they promote education, raise awareness and even rescue girls. Being one of the fastest growing regions for human trafficking, South Asian countries suffer from poverty and lack of development which creates the perfect environment for this type of activity. However the movement still faces difficulties in getting mandatory licenses from the government to run shelter homes. See: <http://bit.ly/2wUNA50>

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