

My Progress through the Gifts of the Medicine Wheel

Course #3 IPL RCDOS – M Marion

By Marcelle Marion

Course # 3 Introduction: Social Equity: racism, including violence, exclusion, and prejudice.
Social determinants of well-being: health, education, housing

I used my class notes and the Medicine Wheel for my reflection on the *Introduction to Contemporary Effects of Colonization I: Social Justice*

What follows are 1 or 2 reflections from the material in the Course that was impactful providing context on social justice in the Diocese and elsewhere in Canada. The Course material engages and meaningfully deepens my work/teaching/Church Catholic Ministry and gave me new approaches for Calls to Action and my ministry commitments to undo and build Catholic mission.



1. East Yellow Acknowledging my starting point of this class

The East is the direction from which the new day comes into the world. It is the direction of renewal. It is the place of innocence, guilelessness, spontaneity, joy and the capacity to believe in the unseen. **When we travel to the East, we will be tested with lessons that will teach us many things. There we will learn of warmth of spirit, purity, trust, hope, and the uncritical acceptance of others.** We will learn to love as a child loves, a love that does not question other and does not know itself. Here courage is born and truthfulness begins.

STARTING POINT - EAST: Beginning of Course #3

“Provide mutual sharing and hope for a respectful and harmonious future as children of God, who together seek beauty and good of all.” Bishop Mark

“Within their own dioceses, Bishops strive with pastoral solicitude to understand and engage issues affecting local Indigenous populations and likewise encourage all the faithful in their dioceses, including the members of religious institutes of consecrated life and of Catholic community organizations, to foster relationships in charity and solidarity with Indigenous Peoples.” CCCB

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⇒ Tested with lessons on the uncritical acceptance of others

The gifts of the East include the TRC calls to action: dialogue - the beginning of hope through knowledge and understanding between the Church and Indigenous People of Canada. Racism – Should a Catholic be anti-Racist: every catholic has a responsibility to understand how the TRC relates to the NT teaching of *love thy neighbour as oneself* and how the history of indigenous identity unfolded with Confederation and assimilation policies.

⇒ Opportunity of the East
to continue to seek knowledge of indigenous heritage through the diverse indigenous communities in Saskatchewan and Canada.



2. RED – South - reflective and integrated understandings

The South is the direction of the sun at its highest point. It is the place of summer, of fullness, of youth, of physical strength and vigor. It is also the time that people work to prepare for the fall and winter months. Hence, symbolically, it is a time of preparing for future, of getting ready for days ahead. **The South is also the place of the heart, of generosity, of sensitivity to the feelings of others, of loyalty, of noble passion and love.**

SOUTH: Middle of Course #3

⇒ Tested with lessons about when Indigenous Canadians have poor access to healthcare and the harms inadequate and substandard housing, food and water is the norm

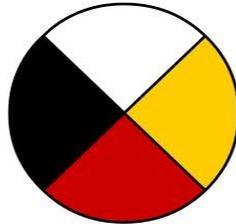
The gifts of the Southern direction: **Education and Standard of Living** and the need for equity. Film *Shannen's Dream*. The heart and generosity and passion of the children and leaders who brought attention and awareness of issues they faced to the Canadian public.

Teaching relates to the history of indigenous identity and investing in youth and our hope for the future. *Jesus said, "Let the children come to me and do not stop them, because the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." Matt 19:14.*

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⇒ Opportunity of the South : Be aware of Indigenous heritage through education, language and culture. Ministry: *“We need to “evangelize in our own language”, we need to “know and understand the lives of indigenous people”. This means being “present”* See Fr Rezende.



3. WEST Black Transformative understandings and learnings in relationship to my ministry

The West is the direction from which darkness comes. It is the direction of the unknown, of going within, of dreams, of prayer and of meditation. **The West is the place of testing, where the will is stretched to its outer limits so that the gift of perseverance may be won.** For the nearer ones draws toward a goal the more difficult the journey becomes. The capacity to stick to a challenge even though it is very hard and even painful is an important lesson to be learned in the West. Indeed, it is the third great lesson in the Medicine Wheel teachings.

West: Middle of Course #3

“We see the critical importance, therefore, as Indigenous and non-Indigenous Catholics, to gather, conduct and distribute well-founded research and analysis on the relationship that binds us. This relationship is rooted in something far deeper than an institution and its history. Rather, it is rooted our participation in the human family, in the Mystical Body of Christ, and in a history governed by an inscrutable Providence that upholds the freedom integral to human dignity.” (Indigenous Catholic Solidarity, Human Dignity and the Common Good)

⇒ Tested with lessons about relationships. Catholic mainstream society and Indigenous aspirations and finding voice such as UNDRIP, the Constitution Act of 1982 that affirms Indigenous Rights

The gifts of the West: Place of testing, where the will is stretched to its outer limits so that the gift of perseverance may be won. The IPL Course 3 was especially impactful on relationships and solidarity with Indigenous People and opening dialogue. The White Paper was the first time the Government of Canada recognized the complete failure of the Indian Act , its colonial provisions, the system wide racism and how treaties were not working. While there was backlash, it ignited new solutions such as self-government, resource sharing agreements and systematic changes some of which continue with the existing Indian Act. Course 3 does not include another major step forward in Indigenous rights post White Paper - Canada’s Section Thirty-five of the Constitution Act, 1982

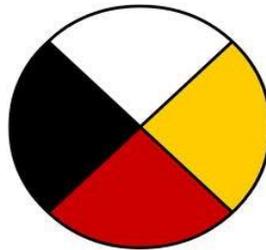
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which recognized the rights of Indian, Métis and Inuit people before UNDRIP and was a significant achievement.

Teaching relates to the legal story of indigenous rights identity and the disentanglement of colonialism and assimilation laws and policies.

- ⇒ Opportunity of the West: Resilience. Be bold and proactive about Indigenous community and relationship building as Christ did with the Samaritans. Indigenous and the Catholic community need to *stretch to its outer limits so that the gift of perseverance may be won.*



4. North – White *Identifying your next steps.*

The North is the place of winter, of white snows that remind us the white hair of our Elders. **It is the dawning place of true wisdom. Here dwell the teachers of intellectual gifts symbolized by the great mountain and the sacred lake.** Some gifts that await the traveler in the North of the medicine wheel include to think, to synthesize, to speculate, to predict, to solve problems, to analyze, to understand and to organize to just name a few.

North: At the end of Course #3

“Leaders are needed to navigate sometimes challenging issues, facilitate respectful conversations among people with diverse political views and move beyond mere accommodation, by presenting occasions for deep learning and action. Topics such as terminology, culture and identity, systemic racism, education, land, treaties and fair consultation need reframing since there are often gaps in understanding. Beyond information, we also need new ways of living and often need to unlearn old ways“ (Leadership for Reconciliation by Morrison & Castellon)

- ⇒ Tested with lessons on the great mountain and the sacred lake - about leadership, future of a relationship of resilience and hope.

The gifts of the North and the international community. Our relationship with Indigenous people is also a global one. Pope Francis in *Fratelli Tutti* shares his vision of a world that values people over profit. Ministry and applying *Fratelli Tutti* and the Calls to Action (TRC)

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- ⇒ Opportunity of the North: Have faith. We must find and embrace Christ and the Christian vocation with courage. The North is the place of winter, of white snows that remind us the white hair of our Elders. *“It is the dawning place of true wisdom.”*
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Notes:

All Medicine Wheels are tools for teaching people about their place in the universe and their relationship to all things created by the Sacred Mystery. When using the Medicine Wheel, all things begin in the Eastern direction. The Four Directions representing East, West, North and South each have their own meaning;

East – Yellow, Spring, Dawn, Tobacco, Spiritual, Infants, Earth, Crawling Creatures.

South – Red, Summer, Day, Sweetgrass, Emotional, Youths, Wind, Winged Creatures.

West – Black, Autumn, Dusk, Sage, Physical, Adults, Water, Four-legged Creatures.

North – White, Winter, Night, Cedar, Mental, Elders, Fire, Two-legged Creatures.