



## A MESSAGE FROM THE MARTHA JUSTICE MINISTRY



Created by Sister Dorothy Moore

Summer has begun, and with it comes some sense of relief and hope. We feel an opening as we emerge from pandemic restrictions, but a weariness in what has been such a time of hardship for so many.

In our justice and creation care work, the past few months have seen reasons for hope, but also deep sorrow. The sorrow is deepest in facing the horrific discovery of the remains of Indigenous children at former residential schools. How can we honour these young lives lost, families shattered, cultures brutalized, recognizing that we are part of a Church that did this? We have made the work of Reconciliation and Right Relations a central focus of our ministry. We work to educate ourselves

and to face the truth, to listen and build friendships, and to advocate for programs and policies that will make a difference, with the guidance of Mi'kmaw communities locally and Indigenous leaders nationally.

We hope that we can be part of the change needed to build new relationships and plant new seeds of hope and compassion, living toward the flourishing of our communities and creation. We are grateful for your prayers and support as we walk on this path together.

Blessings,

*Darlene O'Leary, Coordinator,  
Martha Justice Ministry*



## BILL C-15

Following years of effort, a bill legislating the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) is now law in Canada.

The Sisters of St. Martha, through the UN Federation NGO Liaison, pushed for years for UNDRIP to be legislated and implemented. UNDRIP was adopted by the UN Security Council in 2007, with Canada initially opposing it. Following the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Final Report and Calls to Action, Canada adopted UNDRIP in 2015.

Faith communities pushed hard to make sure that Bill C-15 did not get blocked in the Senate, as happened in 2019 with MP Romeo Saganash's private member's bill. Campaigns and educational webinars took place through the winter and spring to build support for the bill.



These involved groups like Faith in the Declaration, Joint Ecological Ministry, Kairos, and others, and were guided by Indigenous leaders, including Romeo Saganash, former TRC Chairs, Hon. Murry Sinclair and Dr. Marie Wilson, UNDRIP contributor Chief Wilton Littlechild, and others.

An open letter signed by these and other Indigenous leaders, states:

*"This bill ... is a unique opportunity to advance our rights and confront the harms to our people created by colonialism, racism and other forms of discrimination. This is what we fought for."*

We celebrate the passing of this legislation and hope it fulfils the needed implementation of Indigenous rights in Canada.





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## NEW COLLABORATION: JOINT ECOLOGICAL MINISTRY (JEM)

This spring, we joined with Joint Ecological Ministry (JEM) in ongoing efforts to raise awareness and encourage advocacy on the important topic of Indigenous rights.

We held two *Call to Allyship* webinars, the first featuring Fr. Daryold Winkler, an Ojibway priest from Ottawa, Canadian Religious Conference's (CRC) Alain Ambeault and Sabrina di Mateo, and Anglican Bishop Riscylla Shaw. The first *Call to Allyship* webinar heard from Fr. Daryold Winkler, who shared his own experiences of racism and internalized racism. It also included the efforts the CRC has made in working toward reconciliation and heard from Anglican Bishop Shaw about the Anglican Church's extensive work at restructuring in response to the TRC Calls to Action.

The second webinar focused on mobilizing religious congregations to support Bill C-15. I had an opportunity, along with Joe Gunn of Centre Oblat in Ottawa, to meet with Senator Mary Coyle to discuss the study of Bill C-15 in the Senate. We thank Senator Mary Coyle for being a strong advocate for legislating UNDRIP.



## MARTHA JUSTICE MINISTRY MEETING WITH MP

In June, Martha Justice Ministry Core Group members had a meeting with MP Sean Fraser to discuss issues of concern.

These included progress regarding the Mi'kmaw fishery and Bill C-15, concerns about the Goldboro LNG project and possible social, economic, and environmental impacts, ongoing calls to strengthen the mandate of the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise, and federal support for a basic income. We appreciate the openness of MP Fraser to meeting and talking with us about these and other important issues.





## GLOBAL CATHOLIC CLIMATE MOVEMENT ATLANTIC ROUNDTABLE

**In May, Darlene O’Leary, Martha Justice Coordinator joined in the first Global Catholic Climate Movement Atlantic Roundtable meeting.**

This was an opportunity to share in reflection and learn about what is happening in Atlantic Canada in the work of climate justice and creation care. The Global Catholic Climate Movement is an international network created in response to Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’* and the Paris Climate Agreement. The network includes over 650 Catholic organizations around the world.

GCCM Canada’s Atlantic Roundtable will meet again in the fall. We hope to build collaborative efforts to share in education and advocacy, including around the Season of Creation, the *Laudato Si’* Action Platform, and the fall UN Biodiversity Conference and Conference of the Parties (COP) 26.



Learn more @ <https://catholicclimatemovement.global/>



## GOLDBORO LNG LETTER

In May, Martha Justice Ministry sent a letter to MP Sean Fraser regarding the possible application for funding from the federal government to support the Goldboro LNG project. On July 2<sup>nd</sup>, Pieridae Energy announced that it would not be proceeding with the project. We were happy to join our voices with the significant campaigns from the Council of Canadians, Responsible Energy Action Antigonish, and Mi'kmaw grassroots women that raised awareness about the potential damaging social, economic, and environmental impacts of this project.

May 11, 2021

Dear Mr. Fraser,

On behalf of Martha Justice Ministry, Sisters of St. Martha, Antigonish, I want to share with you our concerns about plans for the Goldboro LNG project in Guysborough County and the possible financial contribution of up to \$1 billion dollars to this project by the federal government.

We share the concerns of environmental groups and Mi'kmaw grassroots women about the risks involved with this project. First, while less polluting than coal or oil, liquid natural gas (LNG) still contributes to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and exacerbates the climate crisis. We believe that the federal government should be supporting projects that reduce GHG emissions, as Canada has committed to doing through the Paris Accord and through the recent legislation on GHG emissions reduction targets, Bill C-12.

The Goldboro LNG project has been under discussion for many years, and in that process local and national groups have raised concerns about its social, economic, and environmental impacts. Following on campaigns by the Council of Canadians and statements from grassroots Mi'kmaw grandmothers, our letter outlines the risks involved in this project and points to the more beneficial use for federal funds in the region.



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## GOLDBORO LNG LETTER *continued*

Further, the Goldboro LNG project has highly questionable viability. There are a number of barriers to even getting this project off the ground, and a number of reasons why providing financial support to this project is a poor use of Canadian tax dollars, as highlighted by the Council of Canadians, among others. There are other ways to support the community and region that would have better immediate and long-term impacts socially, economically, and environmentally.

Finally, I am sure you know of the concerns being raised by Mi'kmaw grassroots women about the development of a "man camp" to work on this project, potentially housing up to 5000 construction workers. While Peiridae Energy has claimed that Mi'kmaw communities will benefit from this project, Mi'kmaw grassroots women are raising significant concerns about a lack of consultation and the potential for violence against Indigenous women that could result. There is clear evidence that "man camps" in other locations have been associated with violence against women and increased trafficking of women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people.

We hope that the federal government is not led by the promise of short-term financial benefits from this project, a promise that must be challenged, at the cost of the long-term economic, social, and environmental well-being of this region and our planet.

We hope that you will give these concerns a great deal of consideration. We welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you further.

Sincerely,

*Darlene O'Leary, PhD  
Coordinator, Martha Justice Ministry  
Sisters of St. Martha, Antigonish*

Cc. Hon. Chrystia Freeland, Minister  
of Finance

