



PASTORAL LETTER FROM PRESIDING BISHOP KATHERINE JEFFERTS SCHORI - MAY 2012

This Church has worked to alleviate systemic and structural injustice in many ways, and our repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery in 2009 is a recent example. Since at least 1976, our advocacy work has included support for First Nations land claims in Canada, advocacy with the U.S. government for improved health care, religious freedom, preservation of burial sites and repatriation of remains and cultural resources, increased Federal tribal recognition, and critical Federal Government self-examination around Native American rights. We have affirmed and reaffirmed our desire to strengthen relationships with Native peoples by remembering the past, recognizing the deficits and gifts in our historic and current relationships, and continued work toward healing. We are currently advocating for the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, with provisions directly affecting Native women.

The Doctrine of Discovery work of this Church is focused on education, dismantling the structures and policies based on that ancient evil, support for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and challenging governments around the world to support self-determination for indigenous peoples.

We seek to address the need for healing in all parts of society, and we stand in solidarity with indigenous peoples globally to acknowledge and address the legacy of colonial occupation and policies of domination. Our Christian heritage has taught us that a healed community of peace is only possible in the presence of justice for all peoples. We seek to build such a beloved community that can be a sacred household for all creation, a society of right relationships.