



## Spiritual Reflections

# The-Word-Became-Flesh, Covenant and Kinship of All

By Sr. Petite Lao, RNDM

*Sr. Petite Lao helps us see our treaty relationships with Indigenous peoples in the light of Christian's covenantal relationship with God through the incarnation of Christ among us. It is not through power and conquest that God enters into covenantal relationship with us, but through his humility and self-giving... his desire to be at one with us. Sr. Petite invites us to ponder how we can imitate God in this way in our own treaty relationship with Indigenous peoples.*

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." (John 1) The incarnational spirituality in John's Gospel is the articulation of the Christian tradition pertaining to oneness of all that would be similar to the indigenous people's intuition of interrelationship of all life as expressed, for example, in the Lakota prayer and sacred words, "mitakuye oyasin." Our interpretation of this Christian spiritual insight, and hopefully, experience, could be enhanced by our relationship and interaction with indigenous peoples. We hope and pray to have these opportunities of dialogue.

In the Christian tradition, we say that The-Word-Made-Flesh is our covenant with God. What is a covenant? It is a treaty! The stipulations of this treaty were demonstrated and taught to us by the The-Word-Made-Flesh. In his own words, in the stories about him in the Gospel and our on-going interpretations, we get a sense of the meaning of the covenant and how we might express this in our lives. This covenant ties us with God, with each other, and with the whole of creation.

The-Word-Became-Flesh's main preoccupation on earth was to introduce us to the great love of the Creator, whom he intimately called Abba.

He wanted so much also for his followers to be united with him and his Abba through the bond of the Spirit. He did not envision an exclusive club for his followers. It was to be a spiritual experience so that they might perceive the depth of oneness and union

with God and with the whole of creation, "for God so loved the world." (John 3:16) He demonstrated the idea of friendship rather than a kyriarchal relationship. He washed his disciples' feet to invite them to do this for each other and to others. This was his ultimate lesson before he died. He said that there is no greater love than to give one's life for one's friends. (John 15:13)

These principles of relationship as expressed by The-Word-Became-Flesh, who shared our creatureliness, are embedded in creation, in the dance of life, death and transformation to which, as Christians, we also must participate in. Perhaps, we perceive this to be practiced within the human community, however, the life of St. Francis, who lived intensely and radically the Gospel, extended this beyond the human community to the whole of creation.

Discipleship in this context is following the Way of goodness and love that The-Word-Became-Flesh taught, first and foremost, in his way of humility and self-giving and secondly, in his way of seeking oneness and unity with all.

If the expression of our Christianity is in the form of power and conquest, we can be certain that we have truly veered away from the teachings of The-Word-Became-Flesh! It is a violation of the covenant.



The disciples were also sent to be missionaries, “Shalom, as the Father has sent me, so I send you.” (John 20:21) The-Word-Became-Flesh sent his disciples out to spread his teachings about the great love of God, healing, mercy, forgiveness, peace, and unity. He sent them out to encounter others and to scale the existing boundaries and divisions which were aplenty in his time, so, too, in our time. If we consider ourselves as disciples of The-Word-Became-Flesh, then, this, too, is our vision and task in our world today. This is keeping the covenant.

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## Questions for Reflection

1. *What struck you most?*
2. *What are the implications of being in a covenant that “ties us with God, with each other, and with the whole of creation? What are the implications of being in treaty relationships with Indigenous peoples through this covenantal lens?*
3. *Share a quote or insight that sticks with you.*