

## HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 8/26/2022

Dear Friends in CHRIST,

Recently, Pope Francis visited to Canada. While there, he traveled around the country extending an apology to the indigenous people of Canada for the role of the Roman Catholic Church in Canada's residential school system. These schools, funded by the Canadian government and administrated by the Catholic Church, were aimed at erasing the culture and language of indigenous people. Many have applauded this "Pilgrimage of Penance" as the Pope calls it. Other have said it does not go far enough. Still others have denounced the apology, criticizing the Pope's admission of fault on behalf of the Catholic Church and saying that he never should have acknowledge the abuse.

There is a word from the Bible that I have talked about before. This word is *anakephalaiossthai* in the Greek. The first part *ana* means "again." *Kephale* means "head." So, *anakephalaiossthai* means to "bring things together under one head." Sometimes this word is translated "recapitulate" or "retell." It's like when you have been sharing a story for a long time from the same perspective with all the same details. But then the story is retold, or recapitulated, in a different way. And when it is retold, you don't remove all the ugly details or the unfortunate events. You include them, but in the retelling, they appear in a new light. They are what they are, but in the restating, they are understood differently, with new meaning and perspective and weight.

This is what the Pope did. For years, there have been others who have told the story of the indigenous Canadian children, only to have the tales downplayed or even dismissed. It was like, "If we don't admit it, it didn't really happen." Yet, there were many people who knew it happened. Now, the Pope's apology retells the story in a way that casts a new viewpoint on this history and its implications. And that's not a bad thing.

The Christian Church should be about speaking the truth, even when truth hurts. We should hate lies, even when they help us. It certainly can be debated whether the Pope's apology goes far enough, but it is a step in the right direction of telling the truth and then taking responsibility for the Church's role in this truth. Covering things up doesn't change what is true. But it can delay or prevent healing and bringing together. Admission, confession if you will, opens the door for remedy to victims and forgiveness for the perpetrator. It is a way of saying, "I hear you; how you've been wronged; how you continue to suffer." What Pope Francis is doing is *anakephalaiossthai*, bringing things together under one head, the head of JESUS CHRIST who calls us to seek the truth always and then to work to continue to bring things together under HIM.

In CHRIST'S love,  
Pastor Jeffrey