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SPIRITUALITY AND CULTURE

By Deacon Marlon Leneagh Sr, Diocesan Director, Native American Ministry for the Diocese of Rapid City

At the very dawn of creation was God. God spoke his Word and the Spirit swept over the darkness of the waters and life began. It all began with the simplest of words and yet authoritative words, “Let there be light” and there was light. Then God also said, “Let us make man in our image”.

The same is true from the Lakota creation story that everything came from Wakantanka, “the Great Mystery”. All cultures or people have creation stories and they are all connected with a common thread; a Creator, a supreme spiritual.

All nations have experiences and accounts of how God reveals himself in a way that they could understand. God heard the prayers of all those

seeking strength and wisdom from hilltops as they sought visions and he heard the prayers as sacrifices were made on for all the people as pierced warriors pleaded and sang their songs in the Sundance Circle. The same message has constantly reverberated throughout the centuries; “God is with his people.”

“So, when we as Native People read the Gospel, we must read it as Native People, for this is who we are. We can no longer try to be what we think the dominant society wants us to be. As Native Catholic people, we must set out with open minds and hearts; then we will encounter Jesus Christ. When we can do this, we shall meet Jesus as our brother and recognize him as

the one who has been with us all along as the quiet servant, the one who has strengthened us through these centuries. Then we will know that the cry of Jesus Christ from the cross was the cry of our people at Wounded Knee, Sand Creek and other places of the mass death of our people. He was our companion during these years of our invisibility in this society. This same Jesus is the one who challenges us to grow beyond ourselves. This is the challenge of evangelization. If we take up the challenge, we shall sense that the Holy Spirit is with us and be glad. This is the heart and core meaning of the Gospel.” (Taken from *The People*, National Catholic Educational Association, 1992.)



Pope Francis, @Pontifex

When you meet other people in the Lord, you can be sure God's surprises will follow.

4 Mar 2018, Pope Francis on Twitter