



## Office of the Bishop

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5 July 2021

Dear Rev. Fathers and My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I had the opportunity to celebrate Mass on the Lower Similkameen Indian Band Lands this past Sunday. We gathered under a tent provided by the Okanagan Nation Alliance next to the cemetery on the Chopaka Indian Reserve.

Despite the losses they have endured, despite the forces that seek to divide us, we met as one people, united in Faith. The love of Christ was truly present among us. I sincerely admire their resilience, the overflowing warmth and beauty that comes from their hearts and the wisdom they shared.

I ask for continued prayers for all of our indigenous brothers and sisters, especially for those who have lost their mission churches, including the most recent in Hedley and Chopaka. It is heartbreaking that these places of worship and prayer, which had such significance in their lives, have been taken from them.

Please also pray that the Spirit of Peace will overcome the spirit of anger and vengeance in our world and bring forgiving hearts to one and all.

✠ Gregory J Bittman  
Bishop of Nelson