

On September 10, 1984 Pope John Paul II, spoke to the Indians in Canada:

"Your encounter with the Gospel has not <sup>only</sup> enriched you, It has enriched the the Church... The Gospel does not destroy what is be in you. On the contrary, it enriches as it were from within the spiritual qualities and gifts that are distinctive of your cultures... In addition, your American Indian and Inuit traditions permit the development of new ways of expressing the message of salvation."

Pope John Paul II continues:

"An acute sense of the presence of God, love of your family, respect for the aged, solidarity with your people, sharing, ~~hospitality~~ Hospitality, respect for nature, the importance given silence and prayer, faith in providence.....Guard this wisdom preciousy."

The Second Vatican Council affirmed a Degree given the Missiary Activit of the Church Number 22:

"Particular traditions, together with the individual patrimony of each family of nations, can be illumined by the light of the Gospel and then be taken up into Catholic ~~unity~~ unity."

We now find The Sacred Pipe, the sweat lodge, and sweet grass ceremonies part of civilized religious rituals for some Indians. But it is the Pipe that re-appears after decades of being classified as "Witchcraft", which the church claims, to have misunderstood its purpose and meaning. I can only say, that this misunderstanding of this ritual cost the lives of close to 7 million Indians in California in a 12 year period of time.

In the book, THE SPIRITUAL LEGACY OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN, Joseph Epes Bro states: The Sacred Tobacco Pipes of the plains people express in comprehensiv synthetic manner all that is most sacred to the people....The pipes are used on all ritual and important occasions, and any agreement or relationship sealed with the smoking of a pipe is held inviolate.. The pipes, which have long wooden stems and stone bowls, are understo to be an axis joining and defining a path between heaven and earth... ..that in smoking the pipe together, each person is aided in remembering his or her own center, which is now understood to be the same center of every other person, and ~~the~~ of the Universe..... ..HE CONTINUES: ..In solemn prayer, as each grain of carefully prepared tobacco is placed in the pipe, mention is made of some aspect of creation, so when the bowl is full, it contains the TOTALITY, of TIME, SPACE, and ALL OF CREATION including humankind."

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