

Prayer

Creator, we are all children of your creation and of many different cultures, but we do not see all people or their culture as we see ourselves.

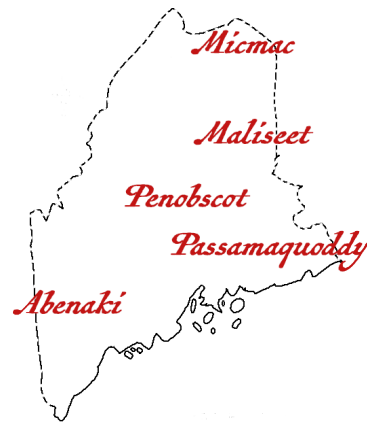
We believe that all people should have social justice and equality, but we do not treat all people as we want to be treated.

Fill us with your spirit of love, wisdom and compassion that we may see one another as you see us.

And we pray that we may embrace all people, especially our Indigenous brothers and sisters, the Wabanaki, who struggle to maintain their culture and their inherent sovereignty.

Amen.

Composed by Committee



To learn more about the Episcopal Committee on Indian Relations, contact

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In 1991 the Episcopal Committee on Indian Relations was formed by the Episcopal Diocese of Maine.

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN MAINE COMMITTEE ON INDIAN RELATIONS



Our Mission

We are called by our Creator to deepen our relationship with the Wabanaki of Maine, to stand with the tribes in the pursuit of justice, to affirm their inherent sovereignty and to support the preservation of Native languages and culture.



John Gast, *American Progress* (1872)

Our Motivation

We ruefully acknowledge the long, historical and ongoing dispossession of Indigenous Peoples' lands, territories and resources, crippling their ability to exist according to their own needs and values.

The legal basis for this tragedy lies in the *Doctrine of Christian Discovery*. During and after the Crusades, church theological and legal doctrines were promulgated asserting that non-Christians were to be considered enemies of the Catholic faith, and, as such, less than human. Based on the notion of innate European superiority, the Church gave formal permission for Christian European Nations to invade, take ownership, and exploit any land they discovered that they

deemed non-Christian.

This doctrine was adapted into American law in 1792, when U.S. Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson declared that the *Doctrine of Discovery* would extend from Europe to the infant U.S. government.

Legally enabled, the U. S. government went about dislocating Indigenous Peoples from their lands and waters, estranging them from their ancestral territories. These actions led to the *de facto* genocide of Native Americans.

The Episcopal Committee on Indian Relations views the *Doctrine of Christian Discovery* and the ensuing colonialism as evil, immoral frameworks, incompatible with the teachings of Jesus. We seek to eradicate such doctrines from the Church and all governmental and social institutions.

Acting on the recommendation of the Episcopal Committee on Indian Relations, in 2007 the Episcopal Diocese of Maine passed a resolution repudiating the *Doctrine of Christian Discovery*. In 2009 The Episcopal Church USA passed a similar resolution.

As we continue learning by studying about as well as listening to Indigenous People, we are unfolding new ways to walk and work with our Indigenous sisters and brothers in healing and remedying these egregious wrongs.

Our Vision

- ❖ To amplify the Diocese of Maine's relationships with all Wabanaki tribes (Abenaki, Maliseet, Micmac, Passamaquoddy, Penobscot).
- ❖ To affirm the inherent sovereignty of the Wabanaki and their right to self-determination.
- ❖ To advocate and organize for tribal self-determination and against acculturation, assimilation, colonialism, and racism.
- ❖ To resist all State of Maine, US, & corporate policies that separate the Wabanaki and all Original Peoples from their connections to the land and all of Mother Earth.
- ❖ To provide educational resources and support to our communities, Diocese, and settler governments as they seek greater understanding of the Wabanaki.