

Justice for our Children; Healing for our Communities
Rev. Michael Johnson, Penn DE Conference

One: We quiet our hearts and remember children. The confusion of being removed from their home; from the bird song that spoke in the morning, from the familiar scent of sweet grass. What was their prayer? What was their cry?

(A moment of silence)

All: We remember their prayer. We remember their cry. And we listen with ear and heart for the cries of other children, so we might respond differently.

One: We quiet our hearts and remember children. The shame of being stripped of their clothes; the cutting of their hair, having their heart language forbidden to be heard on the wind. What was their prayer? What was their plea?

(A moment of silence)

All: We remember their prayer. We remember their plea. And we listen with ear and heart for the pleas of other children, so we might respond differently.

One: We quiet our hearts and remember children. The sorrow of being alone in the world deprived of their relatives, deprived of grandmother's touch, the sound of the drum and the song of the heart. Trying to remember what passes into shadow. What was their prayer? What was their silenced song?

(A moment of silence)

All: We remember their prayer. We remember their song. And we listen with ear and heart for the silenced songs of other children, so we might respond differently.

One: We quiet our hearts and remember children. Those who never returned to their homes, to their people. The children who disappeared. The children of unmarked, forgotten graves. Those who had no songs sung for them, no prayers, buried far from their ancestors. What was their mother's prayer? Who waited for them to return home?

(A moment of silence)

All: We remember their prayer. We remember their waiting. And we listen with ear and heart for mother's prayers for other children, so we might respond differently.

One: We quiet our hearts and remember children. Children grow up and have children of their own. They have forgotten the language of the people. How can they sing the morning song for their children? How can they teach them the dance long forbidden them? How can they help their children become whole again? Can joy return?

(A moment of silence)

All: We remember their prayer. We remember their loss. And we listen with ear and heart for parent's prayers for other children, so we might respond differently.

One: We quiet our hearts and remember children. History can be painful, a trail of many tears, that have stained the cheeks of many children who have been victims of cultural genocide. It is past, but not past. It has happened long ago, but also yesterday. Children are still assaulted and shamed; still robbed from their mother's arms. We honor their bravery. We honor their tenacity. We honor their perseverance.

(A moment of silence)

All: We remember their prayer. We remember their bravery. And we listen with ear and heart for their words of defiance and we honor them and the children of today, so we might respond differently. Amen.