

LCWR ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 2014 DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY

RESOLUTION

The Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) calls upon His Holiness, Pope Francis, to consider deeply how the Church may embody in these times the Christian heart of justice and compassion toward indigenous peoples. We humbly and respectfully ask Pope Francis to lead us in formally repudiating the period of Christian history that used religion to justify political and personal violence against indigenous nations and peoples and their cultural, religious, and territorial identities.

LCWR stands in solidarity with indigenous peoples' requests, and with our members who have supported the indigenous peoples' requests, and ask that Pope Francis:

- Publicly acknowledge, with specificity, the continuing harm that indigenous peoples suffer as a direct result of the Doctrine of Discovery formalized in certain papal bulls circa 15th century (*Dum Diversas*, *Romanus Pontifex*, and *Inter Caetera*);
- Publicly clarify and repudiate any remaining legal status of these bulls, especially the following: (1) Papal grant of the ancestral territories of indigenous peoples to Christian European monarchs "in perpetuity," and (2) Papal authorization for European Christian monarchs to "assume dominion in perpetuity over indigenous peoples and their territories;"
- Grant the request of indigenous peoples by dialoguing with their leaders in good faith and collaborating with them in planning and completing a sacred ceremony that reconciles with them; and
- Issue a pastoral statement to the courts of settler nations, urging them to change those elements of their laws that derived from these papal bulls and that harm indigenous peoples even to this day.

RATIONALE

LCWR embraces the interconnectedness of all creation and the inherent dignity of all human life. We collaborate in Catholic church and societal efforts that influence systemic change, and we utilize our corporate voice in solidarity with peoples who experience any form of violence or oppression. We stand in solidarity with indigenous nations and peoples who have suffered, and continue to suffer, untold misery as a continuing effect of these papal bulls. We join their effort to transform the fundamental systemic nature of their suffering and embrace a future where all may be one.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

LCWR's Executive Director is encouraged to implement this resolution by sending a letter to Pope Francis.

LCWR members are encouraged to study this issue and follow up with the general membership through the regular channels of LCWR.