

Episcopalians repudiates doctrine

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

Tribal members Jon George, his son, Trey, Lisa Archuleta and Charlene (Charlie) Westley joined Episcopal Rev. Albert Krueger, the Portland Diocesan Missioner to Native American communities, for Mass on Sunday, Oct. 10.

It was there that Father K, as he is called, announced the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery for the first time at the parish level. The repudiation was first approved by the U.S. Episcopal Church at its July 17, 2009, convention in Anaheim, Calif.

The doctrine originated among Catholics with Pope Nicholas V's issuance of the papal bull *Romanus Pontifex* in 1452. The bull allowed Portugal to claim and conquer lands in West Africa.

In 1493, Pope Alexander VI extended to Spain the right to conquer newly-found lands, with the papal bull *Inter caetera*. In 1496, the Episcopal Church, under King Henry VII of England, held that "Christian sovereigns and their representative explorers could assert dominion and title over non-Christian lands with the full blessing and sanction of the church," according to *Episcopal Life Weekly*, a publication of the Episcopal Church.

The repudiation comes even as Native Americans continue to see their reservation lands held in trust by the federal government, without the right to independently buy, sell or develop these lands. American law on the subject is a direct result of these policies and follows U.S. Supreme Court decisions interpreting the Doctrine of Discovery starting with *Johnson v. McIntosh* in 1823.

Much of this history, as well as many personal experiences, emerged at the celebration held in the North Portland parish of St. Andrew.

Morning Mass was followed later in the afternoon by a discussion group fueled with chicken, ham and potato salad, fruits and pies prepared by Lisa Archuleta with help from Don Amundson, parish lector for St. Andrew.

"This is something we needed to begin doing," said Father K. "We've had fits and starts before, but we're expressing the heart and mind of the Episcopal Church of the United States."

The service included Jon George both in the entry and the service. It included a blessing song from the Santee Dakota Tribe of Nebraska, and prayers for reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous people from a New Zealand Episcopal prayer book.

The job ahead, Father K said, is to educate both the church and people about the importance of acknowledging this historical travesty for indigenous people. It was with that in mind that the discussion group embarked in the afternoon.

Grand Ronde Tribal members participated for other reasons besides that they support the effort, according to Jon George, who works



Photo by Ron Karten

Tribal members Trey George, left, and his father, Jon George, center, drum along with Episcopal Rev. Albert Krueger, right, at a special mass in Portland dedicated to teaching about the Doctrine of Discovery and why the U.S. Episcopal Church has repudiated it.

as a Vocational and Rehabilitation specialist in the Portland satellite office.

"Father K has been part of our family for 10 years," George said. "He came to the Portland office one time and wanted to learn more about our local culture. He always comes to our gatherings and classes. Then, he started working with us on the repatriation of the Summer's Collection (held in storage at the British Museum). Usually, when he has something going, he asks us if we'll be a part."

"How I respect Father K's passion for Native culture!" George said. "He wanted to bring a part of our Native culture into his service. I felt honored to do it."

George smudged down parishioners during the service.

"I thought it was a beautiful service," said parishioner Nathan Keith. "It was something we needed to do."

During the discussion afterwards, parish fundraiser Walt Myers said that the service got him "thinking of history classes and how much we didn't get taught."

"I'm almost 80," said Akimel O'odham (Arizona) Elder Rod McAfee, "and I've seen (the effects of the Doctrine of Discovery) and it's not a pretty picture. I don't like to talk about what happened to my people. There's so much." He added that he had to change his Indian name to be baptized into the Presbyterian Church.

Alvin Benjamin, a teacher in Woodburn, said that the Woodburn School District had changed the standard history to reflect "what really happened to Indians."

"The mix of political and theological ideas is dangerous," said parishioner and attorney Kenneth E. Kahn II, a defender of indigenous people with legal issues, "but that is the history we have to work with." Kahn went on to describe the three Supreme Court decisions that brought the Doctrine of Discovery

into the U.S. legal system.

Lewis & Clark Law School professor Robert J. Miller (Eastern Shawnee), a judge for the Grand Ronde Tribal Court of Appeals, described how Capt. Meriwether Lewis "started branding trees" with his name and rank as a representative of the U.S. government as he traveled west.

"He was making claims under the Doctrine of Discovery," Miller said.

The Doctrine of Discovery is mostly forgotten today, said Kahn, because there is little left to "discover."

Sean Cruz, formerly chief of staff for Oregon State Sen. Avel Gordly, was first to push Father K to address the Doctrine of Discovery in the church.

Cruz is currently executive director for 1000 Nations that is working on the 2011 (first annual) Jim Pepper Arts Festival in Portland. He described why it took the federal government 50 years to fulfill its promise of housing for the Celilo Indians after the falls were flooded for the dam.

"They didn't build the housing (in a timely way) because they wanted the Indians to leave," he said. "The area where the Indians fished and lived was narrow, and (the federal

government) wanted to put the interstate and a railroad track through. To this day, there is an Oregon Parks sign at Celilo Falls that reads, 'The flooding did not affect the Indian way of life.'"

"If the church has come around," asked Christine Dupres (Cowlitz), "what is the next step?"

Some said that they had acquired their interest in indigenous history through the writings of Vine Deloria and Dee Brown's "Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee."

Parishioner George F. Hood showed a video he made for the Wasco Museum in The Dalles that showed Tribal fishermen at Celilo Falls before the dam inundated the traditional fishing grounds.

Bonnie Kahn, wife of Kenneth Kahn, has worked for the Tribal satellite office as a life skills coach. Toward the end of the discussion, she presented Lisa Archuleta with a beaded necklace and Father K presented Archuleta with some of his own artwork, framed.

Some 60 attended both the service and the discussion afterward.

The celebration came the day before much of the nation celebrated Columbus Day, long a reflection of America's worst excesses under the Doctrine of Discovery. ■

2010 Tribal Marketplace dates

- Nov. 5-6, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Nov. 7, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Nov. 19-20, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Nov. 21, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Dec. 3-4, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Dec. 5, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Dates subject to change due to conflicting Tribal or SMC events. Located across from Cedar Plank Buffet. For more information, contact Buzz Simmons at 971-226-9799.