

**OPENING PRAYER**

**MEETING OF THE METIS NATION CABINET**

**REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN**

**MARCH 29, 1993**

**BY FATHER GUY LAVALLEE, OMI**

looked up at him inquisitively and asked: "What the heck is this all about?" And I went on to read the objectives. In a nutshell, they read as follows:

The objectives of the World Council for Indigenous People shall be:

- to identify and bring together indigenous peoples from around the world:
  - to identify and address problems affecting indigenous populations today;
  - to promote social, economic and educational well-being of indigenous populations around the world;
  - to combat racism, and physical and cultural genocide;
  - and to lobby the United Nations regarding the plight of Indigenous peoples around the world.

Great Spirit, I ended up working for three years with a team of five people, headed by George Manuel to set up the World Council of Indigenous People. The preparatory meeting was held in Georgetown, Guyana, in April 1974, and the founding meeting, which brought together close to six hundred indigenous people from nineteen countries from around the world, was held in Port Alberni, British Columbia in October 1975.

At that time, Great Spirit, in 1971, I had just finished spending four years in Winnipeg at the St. John Bosco Centre, as member of a team of Metis men and women helping to organize the Manitoba Metis Federation. I can truly say that the objectives as stated in the World Council document were substantially the same as the objectives that we had formulated for the Metis people of Manitoba in 1971.

Great Spirit, within this great movement of the emancipation of indigenous populations which was taking place around the world in the 1960s and in the 1970s, the Metis people in Canada were at the forefront of indigenous groups to take their destiny into their own

hands, and to develop policies and programs that would eventually lead them on the road to self-sufficiency.

At that time, Great Spirit, the Metis people from many provinces got together and laid the foundations for the organizations we have today, albeit with great difficulty at times. People did not know each other as well then, as they do today. Travelling across the country was limited to a few times during the year. At times, there was even some mutual suspicion among the members. So much so, Great Spirit, that in the beginning, the building of trust and confidence among the members remained a constant goal and objective within the organization.

Great spirit, the Metis Nation has experienced and has travelled many long and winding roads in the past. These roads have been marked by hard work by peoples at all levels. they also have been marked by some real joys and sorrows. Our recent past has been marked by both happy and sad events. Some of our leaders have passed on to that great hunting ground on high, while others were honoured with special assignments.

Metis patriots like Angus Spence, Médéric McDougall and Stan Daniels, all of whom I came to know personally, strived onward not knowing very often where the next dollar would come from, or where the next move would take them. Back in 1928, 300 Metis held a meeting in St. Albert, Alberta under the leadership of Morris L'Hirondelle and Felix Callihoo. Other such meetings also took place, in the 1930s in Saskatchewan, under the leadership of the Bradys and the Norrises. These people met for one purpose: to assert the nationhood of the Metis people. And as they moved forward, they identified and formulated political strategies and goals for themselves and for the Metis people.

And, Great Spirit, they accomplished their work mainly because, they believed, and it is a belief I deeply share with them, they accomplished their work mainly because they had an unabiding faith

in the capacity and in the ability the Metis people had to look after themselves, to better themselves, and to contribute in a constructive way to the betterment of Canada.

Great Spirit grant that we never forget these original creative intuitions and the daring spirit of our forefathers and of our foremothers. These original intuitions form an integral part of the precious and priceless legacy which they left us.

This legacy, Great Spirit, embodies the undisputed principle which brings us together again, here, today, namely, that we believe, as a people, as a Nation, as members of the Metis Nation, that we can indeed look after ourselves, that we can better ourselves and our families, as our forefathers and foremothers have proven in the past, and that we can indeed, contribute in many ways in a constructive manner to the betterment of Canadian society. This undisputed principle of believing in ourselves, Great Spirit, is also the very foundation upon which the Metis Nation is built, shaped and nurtured.

Great Spirit, we must admit that it is also with some trepidation that we come together again here today. For at this particular time in our history, we feel, Great Spirit, that we have some rather important decisions to make, decisions which will affect the lives of our constituents across the Metis Nation.

What we are saying, Great Spirit is that we are perhaps, at a turning point in the history of our organization as a Nation. The fact is we are talking about establishing new structures within the organization, and perhaps, propose a new vision for the members of the Metis Nation. And rightfully so, Great Spirit. For history teaches us that any nation, any culture, any group of people that refuses to grow, that does not change with the times, and that does not learn to adapt, and to cope with new situations, and meet the new challenges of the day, is subject to decline, to regression, and eventually, to failure.

Great Spirit, such has not been the history of the Metis Nation in Canada.

This is not the first time, Great Spirit, and it probably won't be the last time either, that the Metis Nation comes to a crossroad where it has to make important decisions affecting its organizational structure and its sense of direction for the future.

The history of the Metis Nation, Great Spirit, is the history of a people who had its share of joys and pains and challenges, in time of peace and in time of war, on the battlefield at home and abroad. The history of the Metis Nation also depicts a people who never gave in to adverse situations in their lives.

On the contrary, the Metis were people who were resilient, Great Spirit, a people who bounced back and fought back, a people who relied on their intestinal fortitude and inner courage, what I like to call, the power and strength within us, the power and strength that we all have within us, each and everyone of us, and a power and strength that we all share with one another, as members of the Metis Nation.

It is first and foremost this power and strength, within each and everyone of us, Great Spirit, that the Metis Nation will rely on to meet and to overcome the challenges of today. This is the very power and strength that the Metis Nation will rely on to design new organizational structures, to plan new political strategies, and to chart cultural paths, worthy of every member of the Metis Nation.

Above all, Great Spirit, we want this new structure to serve the people well. It is our earnest hope, Great Spirit, that this new structure will provide new avenues and new opportunities for participation in a fuller and more meaningful life for all Metis people in Canada. For example, to name a few, groups like the Metis veterans, the Metis youth, the Metis elders, the Metis policemen and

policewomen, and members of the Metis business and academic communities.

Furthermore, Great Spirit, the Metis people want to move forward in affirming its nationhood. The Metis Nation can no longer wait for the governments to make their move. Like your own people in the Old Testament, Great Spirit, who demanded that their rights and nationhood be recognized by the legal authorities of their times, the time has come for the Metis Nation to move ahead with self-government. That time is now!

Great Spirit, we therefore envision a new future for the Metis Nation, a future based on self-government, a government of the Metis Nation for the Metis Nation, by the Metis Nation.

Great Spirit, within the new structure of self-government, we want to become not just ordinary people, not just ordinary Canadians, but, we want to become the best, the best people you want us to be.

And to achieve our goals, Great Spirit, we seek your guidance and inspiration. Grant your spirit of Knowledge and of Wisdom to all the members of the Metis Nation, and honour and respect for one another, as we strive towards the establishment of self-government for our Nation.

In a special way, Great Spirit, we ask you to convey upon our new leaders who are going to be sworn in today, your spirit of Integrity and of Wisdom. Grant, Great Spirit, that they may always speak the true words of their convictions and seek the noble expression of their ideals. Amen.

Merci.

Migwetch.

And Thank you all.

OPENING PRAYER

METIS NATIONAL COUNCIL  
MEETING

REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN  
MARCH 29, 1993

by

FATHER GUY LAVALLEE OMI

Tansi,

An-neen

Bonjour,

Good day everyone,

Great Spirit, in this, the International Year of the World's Indigenous people, we, the members of the Métis Nation of Canada, present here today, come to you with respect and humility. It is also with some sorrow and pain in our hearts that we ask you, Great Spirit, to look in a special way, and lovingly, upon on all our indigenous brothers and sisters who at this very moment, and for whatever reason, are detained, throughout the world, in jails and subject to inhumane conditions of oppression and of violence. Give them, Great Spirit, and their oppressors, strength and courage to overcome greed with love, violence with meaningful dialogue and despair with hope.

Great Spirit, it was in the Fall of 1971, I was working for the Foreign Mission's Office of the Catholic Church in Montreal. George Manuel, the then President of the National Indian Brotherhood in Ottawa phoned me, and said he wanted to have a chat with me. I remember it was on a Friday afternoon. I drove to Ottawa and arrived in his office around ten to five. No sooner then I entered his office that he started with an affirmative voice: "I want you to read this document", he said, "and I want you to tell me what you think of it, if you agree with it or if you disagree with it". The document was over an inch thick, I picked it up,



flipped a few pages, and I neatly tucked it under my arm. "Good", I said, "I'll take it home with me, I'll read it during the weekend, I'll call you next week and I will let you know". "No, no," he insisted, "I want your reaction right away, before 5:00 pm today". I sat rather submissively in the closest chair and immediately, I started to scan leisurely through the document which was entitled: A Proposal to Establish a World Council of Indigenous People. At first, I found the title itself was mind-boggling, for you must remember this is in 1971, 22 years ago. I looked up at him inquisitively and asked: "What the heck is this all about ?" And I went on to read the objectives. In a nutshell, they read as follows: The objectives of the World Council of Indigenous People shall be:

1- to identify and bring together indigenous peoples from around the world:

a- to share information with one another with respect to present living conditions

b- to identify and address problems affecting indigenous populations today

c- to share information on the history of our relationships with our respective governments

d- to strengthens our ties at an international level,

e- to promote social, economic and educational well-being of indigenous populations around the world.

f- to organize an international network and organization of indigenous peoples

eventually lead them on the road to self-sufficiency.

At that time, Great Spirit, the Métis people from many provinces got together and laid the foundations for the organizations we have today, albeit with great difficulty at times. People did not know each other as well then, as they do today. Travelling across the country was limited to a few times during the year. At times, there was even some mutual suspicion among the members. So much so, Great Spirit, that in the beginning, the building of trust and confidence among the members remained a constant goal and objective within the organization.

Great Spirit, the Métis Nation has experienced and has travelled many long and winding roads in the past. These roads have been marked by hard work by peoples at all levels. They also have been marked by some real joys and sorrows. Our recent past has been marked by both joyous and sad events. Some of our leaders have passed on to that great hunting ground on high, while others were honored with special assignments.

Métis patriots like Angus Spence, Médéric McDougall and Stan Daniels, all of whom I come to know personally, strived onward not knowing very often where the next dollar would come from or where the next move would take them. Back in 1928, 300 Métis held a meeting in St. Albert Alberta under the leadership of Morris L'Hirondelle and the Callihoos. Other such meetings also took place, in the 1930s in Saskatchewan, under the leadership of the Bradys and the Norrises. These people met for one purpose: to assert the nationhood of the Métis people. And as they moved

forward, they identified and formulated political strategies and goals for themselves and for the Métis People.

And, Great Spirit, they accomplished their work mainly because, they believed, and it is a belief I deeply share with them, they accomplished their work mainly because they had an unabiding faith in the capacity and in the ability the Métis people had to look after themselves, to better themselves, and to contribute in a constructive way to the betterment of Canada.

Great Spirit, grant that we never forget these original creative intuitions and the daring spirit of our forefathers and of our foremothers. These original intuitions form an integral part of the precious and priceless legacy which they left us.

This legacy, Great Spirit, embodies the undisputed principle which brings us together again, here, today, namely, that we believe, as a people, as a Nation, as members of the Métis Nation, that we can indeed look after ourselves, that we can better ourselves and our families, as our forefathers and foremothers have proven in the past, and that we can indeed, contribute in many ways and in a constructive manner to the betterment of Canadian society. This undisputed principle of believing in ourselves, Great Spirit, is also the very foundation upon which Métis Nation is built, shaped, and nurtured.

Great Spirit, we must admit that it is also with some trepidation that we come together here, today, to accomplish what we feel is best for our people. For at this particular time in our history, we feel, Great Spirit, that we have some rather important

decisions to make, decisions which will affect the lives of our constituents across the Métis Nation.

What we are saying, Great Spirit, is that we are perhaps, at a turning point in the history of our organization as a Nation. The fact is we are talking about establishing new structures within the organization, and perhaps, propose a new vision for the members of the Métis Nation. And rightfully so, Great Spirit. For history teaches us that any nation, any culture, any group of people that refuses to grow, that does not change with the times, and that does not learn to adapt and to cope with new situations and meet the new challenges of the day, is subject to decline, to regression, and eventually to failure. Great Spirit, such has not been the history of the Métis Nation in Canada.

This is not the first time, Great Spirit, and it probably won't be the last time either, that the Métis Nation comes to a crossroad where it has to make important decisions affecting its organizational structure and its sense of direction for the future.

The history of the Métis Nation, Great Spirit, is the history of a people who has had its share of joys and pains and challenges, in time of peace and in time of war, on the battlefield, at home and abroad. The history of the Métis Nation also depicts a people who never gave in to adverse situations in their lives. On the contrary, the Métis were people who were resilient, Great Spirit, a people who bounced back and fought back, a people who relied on their intestinal fortitude and inner courage, what I like to call, the power and strength within us, the power and strength that we

all have within us, each and everyone of us, and a power and strength that we all share with one another as members of the Métis Nation.

It is first and foremost this power and strength within each and everyone of us, Great Spirit, that the Métis Nation will rely on to meet and to overcome the challenges of today. This is the very power and strength that the Métis Nation will rely on to design new organizational structures, to plan new political strategies, and to chart cultural paths worthy of every member of the Métis Nation.

Above all, Great Spirit, we want this new structure to serve the people well. It is our earnest hope, Great Spirit, that this new structure will provide new avenues and new opportunities for participation in a fuller and more meaningful life for all Métis people in Canada. For example, to name a few, groups like the Métis veterans, the Métis youth, the Métis elders, the Métis policemen and police women, and the Métis business and academic communities.

Furthermore, Great Spirit, the Métis people want to move forward in affirming its nationhood. The Métis Nation can no longer wait for the governments to make their move. Like your own people in the Old Testament, Great Spirit, who demanded that their rights and nationhood be recognized by the legal authorities of their times, the time has come for the Métis Nation to move ahead with self-government. That time is now !

Great Spirit, we therefore, envision a new future for the Métis Nation, a future based on self-government, a government of

the Métis Nation, for the Métis Nation, by the Métis Nation.

Great Spirit, within the new structure of self-government, we want to become not just ordinary people, not just ordinary Canadians, but, we want to become the best, the best people you want us to be.

And to achieve our goals, Great Spirit, we seek your guidance. We seek your spirit of Knowledge and of Wisdom. Above all, we ask you to grant all the members of the Métis Nation honor and respect for each other as we strive towards the establishment of self-government for our Nation.

In a special way, Great Spirit, we ask you to convey upon our new leaders who are going to be sworn in today, your spirit of Integrity and of Wisdom. Grant, Great Spirit, that they may always speak the true words of their convictions and seek the noble expression of their ideals. Amen.

Merci

Migwetch

And Thank you

P R A Y E R

on the occasion of

T H E I N S T A L L A T I O N

O F M R. W. Y V O N D U M O N T

A S L I E U T E N A N T G O V E R N O R

O F M A N I T O B A

at 1:30 pm., Friday, March 5, 1993  
in the Chamber of the Legislative Building  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

by F A T H E R G U Y L A V A L L E E O M I

Bonjour  
Good afternoon,  
Anneen  
Tansi,

Great Spirit, it is with humility and respect that we, the people of Manitoba, come to you today. We praise you for being a God of Love and the Father to us all.

And we thank you, Great Spirit, for the beauty of our province and for creating all the people of Manitoba. For today, in **an unprecedented fashion**, we come together, in the Chamber of this historic Legislative Building, people from many ethnic backgrounds and languages, woven together, **like the Metis sash**, into a colorful tapestry, rich in cultural expressions and diversity.

Let it be known across the land, Great Spirit, that the appointment of W. Yvon Dumont as the lieutenant-governor of Manitoba marks an **historic occurrence** in the life of the Métis Nation, and is indeed, an outstanding honour for all the Métis people across Canada.

Car, c'est ici, Grand Esprit, à la Rivière-Rouge, que la Nation Métisse **a pris naissance** il y a près de deux cents ans, alors que les familles Chaboyers, venues de la région des Grands Lacs, s'installaient d'abord, non loin d'ici, à Pembina.

It is also here, at Red River, Great Spirit, some 123 years ago, under the direction of the Riel, Lépine, Breland, and the Goulet, that the Métis Nation **established the first constitutional basis** for the province of Manitoba within the Canadian Confederation.

Great Spirit, all the people of Manitoba and especially the members of the Métis Nation, **stand proudly** here today, **as we salute** W. Yvon Dumont, a proven national Métis leader and a great Canadian statesman, with all the due respect, dignity, and honor, befitting his status and position as the new lieutenant-governor of the province of Manitoba. Great Spirit, it is our prayer that he will always cherish the great pride we have in his achievements.

All our forefathers and foremothers from Red River in 1870, and from Batoche in 1885 would also have been extremely proud. Furthermore, Great Spirit, if anyone, would have **been more proud of this day** than anyone else, it would have been **no other than Louis Riel**. After all, Great Spirit, did he not say at his famous trial in Regina in 1885: "Je sais que par la grâce de Dieu, je suis le fondateur du Manitoba. I know that through the grace of God, I am the founder of the province of Manitoba."



It is our earnest wish, Great Spirit, that the appointment of W. Yvon Dumont as the new lieutenant-governor **will signal the beginning of a new** and constructive and beneficial relationship between the various levels of governments, of the churches, of the academic and business community and the Métis people in Canada.

Great Spirit, we do not know, at the moment, **what lies ahead** for our new lieutenant-governor: who he will meet, where he will meet them, and under what circumstances.

However, Great Spirit, there is one thing we can all be assured of: W. Yvon Dumont will **bring a style all of his own** to the office of the lieutenant-governor, a style that many of us who know him, have come to admire and appreciate, a style readily expressed through his quick wit, his personal charm, and his charisma.

**Boun St-Jouseph**, patroun di Michifs, regarde d'enne manière ben spiciale sur not' nouvou lieutenant-gouverneur, W. Yvon Dumont. Tout li monde, surtout li Michifs, sount ben fiérs di loui. Je vous demande, O Grand Esprit, de le bénir, et de lui accordi **toutes li grâces** qu'il aura besoin pour ben remplir ses tâches et ses devouaires de lieutenant-gouverneur avec dignité, respect et, avec fierté.

We call upon you, Great Spirit, to grant to W. Yvon Dumont, his wife, Lyla, and their three children many graces and blessings of **good health, prosperity, and happiness** as he assumes his duties as the new lieutenant-governor of Manitoba and as the official representative of the Queen among us.

**OPENING PRAYER**  
**METIS NATIONAL COUNCIL SPECIAL ASSEMBLY**  
**FEBRUARY 5, 6, AND 7, 1993**  
**RAMADA RENAISSANCE HOTEL,**  
**VANCOUVER, B.C.**  
**BY**  
**FATHER GUY LAVALLÉE, OMI**

May their decisions, God, reflect the will of the people, sustain our hope and urge each and everyone to commit themselves to grow individually and with others in a true spirit of love, understanding, and respect.

And God, we all know that there are some other Metis people out there who are not with us here today, and for one reason or another, they are suffering.

They are suffering, Lord, in their bodies with various illnesses, some may be bed-ridden in a hospital, while others may be handicapped and confined to a wheelchair. And there are others yet, God, who are suffering, in their mind and in their spirit. Maybe they have difficulty in dealing with resentments, anger, and pain from their past.

May we never forget that they, too, are our brothers and sisters of the Metis Nation. And if the opportunity calls us to lend them a helping hand, help us, Lord, to answer that call in a truly human way.

And now, God, I feel it is only proper and fitting that I continue my prayer by making a public confession. I want to say this right away, God, because I feel I might get into deeper trouble yet, in the near future, if I don't deal with this issue here and now, and get it off my chest once and for all. And, God, while you might have not noticed it yourself, as you can see, this issue is, in my eyes, a rather serious matter.

**What happened is this:** When I opened my prayer and addressed the order of protocol of this most respectful and esteemed council, I had the distinct feeling, God, that I had committed a serious sin in that I did not mention the names of the dignitaries in their proper sequence and order of protocol or if you wish, in this particular context, according to the established and sacred rules of diplomatic etiquette.

What I did, God, and you can imagine my embarrassment, was that I addressed Mr. Yvon Dumont, our newly-appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba first, before you, God, and then I addressed you, God, in second place, after Mr. Dumont.

Now, God, with all due respect to our newly-appointed Lieutenant-Governor and with all the due respect I have for you, I want you to know that I am heartily sorry for this most unfortunate blunder. And yes, God, I want you to know that I am indeed fully repentant at this moment, and I promise you, that I will never, never do this again, unless, of course, Yvon Dumont gives me the permission to do so!

Humour aside, we want to thank you, God, for lending us Yvon during these last few years. Who would have thought, nine years ago, when he was still a very young man, when he was elected the President of the Manitoba Metis Federation,

Co-Chairs  
Co-Présidents

Mr. President  
Monsieur le Président

His Honour, the Honourable Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba,  
Son Honneur, l'Honorable Lieutenant-Gouverneur du Manitoba,

Distinguished Members of the Metis National Senate  
Membres distingués du Sénat National Metis

Dignitaries  
Dignitaires

Delegates to this Assembly  
Délégués à cette Assemblée

Brothers and Sisters of the Metis Nation  
Frères et Soeurs de la Nation Métisse

Good morning, everyone,  
Bonjour tout le monde,  
Tansi,  
Arneen.

Dear God,

First of all, I want to thank Mr. Ron Rivard, the Executive Director of the Metis National Council for extending this kind invitation to me to address the opening prayer at this Special Assembly of the Metis Nation. I want you to know that I accepted this responsibility with candour, zest and enthusiasm.

O Great Spirit, God of love, Father to us all, it is with humility and respect that we, your people, the members of the Metis Nation come to you today.

First and foremost, God, we want to praise you for being our Creator and we thank you for creating us, the Metis Nation. We thank you, God, for this day and for the life you give us everyday.

As the Metis Nation starts once again its deliberations at this Special Assembly, we earnestly ask you, O Great Spirit, to send you spirit of Knowledge and Wisdom to guide all the participants. May your spirit of Knowledge and Wisdom, God, influence and shape the minds of those who will be making decisions, affecting the lives of the many Metis people across the land.

he would be appointed today to the vice-regal status and position of Lieutenant-Governor in the province of Manitoba?

We are all proud of you, Yvon, and indeed, of this day. Louis Riel, Gabriel Dumont, Ambroise-Didyme Lépine, André Nault, Father Ritchot, Maxime Lépine, Marie-Anne Gaboury, Sarah Riel, Pauline Johnson, Pierre Falcon, Cuthbert Grant, Pascal Breland, Elzéar Goulet, Jim Brady, Malcolm Morris, Médéric McDougall, Stan Daniels, Butch Smitheram, Angus Spence, Willie Dumont, Don McIvor, Edward Simard, and all the members of the Metis Nation, men women, and children, those who died at Red River in 1870, at Batoche in 1885, and in the World Wars, all these people, would have been extremely proud of you and of this day.

And, Yvon, we also want you to know that the members of the Metis Nation love you dearly and that the members of the Metis Nation stand proudly beside you here today, and we salute you with all the due respect, dignity, and honour befitting of your status and position as the new Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba.

Let it be known across the land, God, that this event marks a historical day in the life of the Metis Nation, and is indeed, an outstanding honour for all the Metis people across Canada. In 1870, God, the Leader of the Metis Nation, Louis Riel, was banished from his homeland, at Red River, by the Conservative Party who formed the Government of Canada at the time, for traitorously and maliciously, according to some historians, fomenting a so-called insurrection against Our Lady, Her Majesty the Queen. Today, 123 years later, the present Government of Ottawa represented by the same Conservative Party, as in 1870, chooses to impart upon the present Metis leader of Manitoba, Yvon Dumont, the prestigious status and honour of the title of Lieutenant-Governor and of the official representative of Our Lady, Her Majesty the Queen in the province of Manitoba. The historical irony, God, is to say the least, both astonishing and remarkable.

In my humble opinion, God, the appointment of Yvon Dumont underlines the fact, among others, that our forefathers and foremothers never gave up their struggle for the recognition of the political and legal rights of the Metis Nation.

The appointment of Yvon Dumont, God, certifies once more, that our forefathers and our foremothers were right in pursuing the political goals and dreams they had identified for themselves and their families in 1870 at Red River, and again, in 1885, at Batoche.

The appointment of Yvon Dumont, God, is, the undisputed confirmation that the valiant efforts and courageous commitment of our ancestors to gain the historical and political recognition of the Metis Nation in this land have not been in vain, as they continued daringly to strive and to improve the quality of the lives of their families, of the Metis Nation, and of the country they loved so much, Canada.

And they were also right, God, when they charted the historical course and the cultural paths which they had chosen for themselves, for their families, and for their country. We want our forefathers and our foremothers to know, that we shall not forget them and that we shall not forget the rich cultural heritage and political legacy they have left us.

As one of our venerable elder, Mr. Norman Chartrand, from Camperville, Manitoba, told me recently: "Father Guy, there is no such words as Giving up or Quitting in our Michif languages". And I personally want to thank Norman for these words of wisdom and for the conversation that we had in Winnipeg, last December.

Today, God, under new circumstances, the Metis Nation recommit itself, in the same daring spirit of our forefathers and foremothers, to pursue these same political goals and to chart cultural paths worthy of all the members of the Metis Nation. We aim to accomplish this, God, by establishing a Constitution of the Government and People of the Metis Nation.

Let it be known, God, that the Metis Nation shall not rest, until such time when every Metis man, woman and child will have his/her proper place of dignity, honour and respect in this land we call Canada.

O Great Spirit, it is with humility, and respect, that  
We ask you to bless us all  
As we seek to do your will at this annual meeting  
For your greater glory and honour forever and ever.  
Amen. And thank you.