



At A Distance “The Sleeping Giant”



Greetings Saints. Mona and I are delighted to be back in Vancouver after our quick visit back to Montana. We traveled to honor and pay our respects to Mona’s Uncle Jack Bailey, whose Memorial and Crossing Ceremony was this past Sunday at the family ranch in Lame Deer, Montana. From Great Falls to Lame Deer and back again is quite a trek in one weekend, but it gave Mona and I a beautiful opportunity to reconnect with the beauty of the place, from the Rocky Mountains in Western Montana to the rugged foothills and plains country in the east, each with their own beautiful uniqueness and style.

One of these “sacred places” is in the mountains just north of Helena called the “Sleeping Giant.” If you look closely at the picture that I took yesterday, you can see the Giant at rest. Nose and mouth to the right of the photo and his chest and body reclining to the left. Peaceful, serene, tranquil. However, there is an interesting and cautionary tale surrounding the “Giant’s” outwardly calm demeanor.

For generations, the Indigenous people that have called this place home, the Little Shell, the Blackfeet, Cree and Assiniboine have spoken about the “Sleeping Giant.” The Elders speak about how important it is not to awaken the Giant, to keep the Giant asleep, resting and peaceful. The Elders say that if the Giant is awakened it will be “the end of the People.” Hmm, many think...ah, just another legend, myth and folktale...interesting but not particularly relevant. That seemed true until the late 1960’s and early 1970’s.

During that time intercontinental ballistic missile silos began being dug into the heart of our Earth Mother in remote places like North Dakota, Wyoming, Colorado and of course Montana. ICBM’s they were called, and they were built and staffed to bolster the supposed nuclear deterrent strategy of the 1960’s...Mutually Assured Destruction. The theory goes that no nuclear power would dare attack another nuclear power because the retaliation would be total, swift and catastrophic. It would literally be, “the end of the People.”

The “Indigenous myth” of the Sleeping Giant was never really taken seriously until the Air Force began to execute plans to put several of the ICBM silos into the Sleeping Giant’s chest. “When the Giant awakens, it will be the end of the People.” Wisdom Words from long ago, a prophesy of the Elders and Wisdom Keepers spoken around warming fires and in Lodges from the earliest of days.

As we hear each week in our Eucharistic Prayer, “Blessed One, Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier, Lover of Creation, we give you thanks and praise for in the ocean of your steadfast love, you bear us and place the Song of Your Spirit in our Hearts. When we turn from your love and disrespect each other and the Earth, you do not abandon us. Your Spirit speaks through Elders, Prophets, Sages, and Saints in every age, to challenge us and to reveal the vision of your new creation.”

“When the Giant awakens, it will be the end of the People.” Blessedly we have moved on as a society from the brink of mutually assured destruction in the 60’s and 70’s with treaties and agreements around nuclear non-proliferation and the reduction of the world’s nuclear arsenals. Yet regrettably, some lethal artifacts of that cold and anxious time remain. Let us pray for the long and lasting rest of our “Sleeping Giant” so that the People will continue to live and thrive and love one another. Aho.