

My Lord. My name is The Rev. Rob Crosby-Shearer, and I am a Clergy person in the Anglican Church of Canada where I serve a congregation on the traditional and unceded territories of the Esquimalt and Songhees First Nations.

I want to acknowledge that I speak here today on the traditional and unceded territories of the Tsleil-Waututh, Musqueam, and Squamish First Nations.

I stand before you today to plead guilty of Contempt of Court.

As I do so, I wish to respectfully say that I had no intention to depreciate the authority of this Court and deeply apologize if my actions have been received this way.

As you consider my sentencing, I wish to briefly explain to you why I did this.

My presence on the mountain that day was precipitated from a call by Will George of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, issued to religious leaders, to “stand with us in our defense of the lands and waters.”

In responding to this call, I had and have the full support of my Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Logan McMenamie who has urged his clergy to be involved in action for reconciliation with First Nations.

The Rt. Rev. Mark McDonald, the National indigenous Bishop of my Church, who has also joined these very protests, has said this: “The way that this pipeline project has unfolded is an insult to the concept of reconciliation. There was defective consultation of the First Nations involved, as we now see from the firm resistance to the pipeline... this betrays a lack of “Free, Prior and Informed Consent,” a principle of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.”

Recommendation 48 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, chaired by the Honourable Murray Sinclair states this: “We call upon the church parties to the Settlement Agreement... [to] Engage... in ongoing public dialogue and actions to support the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.”

My Lord, I did what I did that day in response to multiple calls from Tsleil-Waututh Leaders, spiritual leaders in my Christian faith community and to follow that recommendation of the TRC.

I felt that this action was important as a statement of hoped-for reconciliation between the Church of which I am a part, who partnered with the Crown to run the destructive Indian Residential Schools - and the First Peoples of these

lands. As Christian, a father, a settler and a clergyperson, I felt it was my responsibility to put my body on the line in this action.

My twin 8 year olds - and my spouse were present at the time of my arrest – as, all told, were 9 people from my congregation. As a father, I do not take these actions lightly, as they are not mine alone, but have consequences for my family.

Even still, after praying about this, and talking with my family and receiving their support, I decided to take this action. I do see my actions as in the tradition of prayerful, nonviolent civil disobedience. I join many other respected members of society, including (as you know) many Christian clergy, and even members of Parliament, who felt and feel that need to stand with solidarity with the Tsleil-Waututh and other First Nations in defence of their lands around the lack of consent.

I am humbly willing to submit that I may have been wrong in my convictions – but they are convictions that I arrived to in listening to the voices of spiritual and indigenous leaders that led me to act in the way that I did.

My Lord, friends in the court - I do sincerely thank you for taking the time to hear my statement today.