

CCRL The Centre for Civic Religious Literacy

CLRC Le centre de litt ratie religieuse civique

April 2020 Newsletter

CCRL Updates

In early March, we co-hosted an engaging public roundtable titled, "[Racism and Civil Society: Seeking Room for Dialogue](#)," in Vancouver. With the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, we welcomed five incredible community leaders to speak on the issue. No one could have imagined the COVID-19 related life-changes in the weeks to come.



Panel conversation with (L to R): [Kasari Govender](#), BC Human Rights Commissioner, [Jennifer Reddy](#), Trustee, Vancouver School Board, [Laura Mannix](#), Director of Community Development, DIVERSECity, [Dr. Moussa Magassa](#), Human Rights Education Advisor, University of Victoria, [Alison Dudley](#), Executive Director, Multiculturalism Branch, BC Ministry of Tourism, Arts & Culture, and host [Alim Fakirani](#), the BC Regional Director for the Centre for Civic Religious Literacy. (<https://youtu.be/RElQjROsvAI>).

In this COVID time, we are very thankful for the healthcare workers, grocery store clerks, postal workers, emergency responders, other frontline workers, and journalists who are working tirelessly to help society persevere and stay informed. We are also tremendously grateful to the political leaders and religious and community leaders who are supporting society at a macro and one-on-one level.

It has thrown our team, many who are full-time teachers and professors, into drastic changes at unprecedented speed. The conferences to meet you and many stakeholders in our work have all been postponed or canceled. Now, we are engaging with our network to plan and prepare for the future while trying to transition into [online engagements](#).

Through all this, we see religious, spiritual, and non-religious leaders and communities respond to this globally. The understanding of civic religious literacy reminds us that the expression and practice of one's worldview really does change as social, political, and economic shifts occur. It is so apparent that Wikipedia has even started an article on it: "[Impact of the 2019–20 coronavirus pandemic on religion](#)", in addition to all the headlines below. Even for religious/spiritual/non-religious groups that do not encourage or require regular in-person gatherings, it is requiring people to adapt certain practices, like mourning. In cultures where funeral services and traditions are exceptionally strong, massive changes are challenging the community well-being at a time that is already trying for many.

For civic well-being, we are also reminded that everyone practices differently, and that society must protect everyone's right to expression and practice of religious and conscience-based worldviews – an easy thing to miss when multiple parts of society change quickly and simultaneously.

Using civic religious literacy, we see: (1) **hate and defiance emerging** from opportunists, such as ISIS and other violent extremist groups, who [target minorities like Sikh Afghans](#), (2) **care and compassion abound** as nightly applause for healthcare workers in the [BC Lower Mainland](#) and [Toronto](#) occur, (3) **our common humanity** as [Canadian religious leaders in ecumenical and interfaith networks unite for the first time in history](#) to encourage all Canadians to protect society and practice self-isolation.

To highlight these pivotal (and other emerging!) changes using the skills of religious literacy, we are listing particular incidents in our [Twitter](#), [FaceBook](#), and [LinkedIn](#) accounts. Please join us as we observe and make sense of these rapid changes to humanity, and seek ways to support one another through them especially as the majority of the world will be entering key religious holidays in the coming weeks.

We wish you good health and peace as we go through this together,

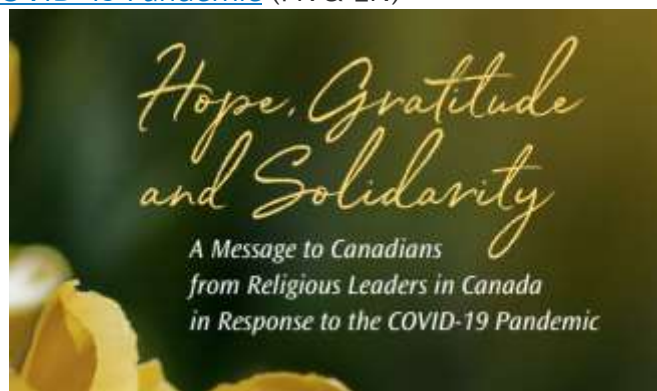
The Pulse



These current headlines reflect how religious, spiritual, non-religious perspectives remain part of our daily lives and society. The special issue on COVID-19 shows a caring and community-based Canada too. Follow our [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#) accounts for headlines on a regular basis. Note, these headlines do not indicate endorsement but are shared for the purpose of awareness.

Canada:

- [How Canadian religious groups are adapting to COVID-19](#) CTV News
- [WSO Calls For Urgent Assistance to Afghan Sikhs After Kabul Attack](#) World Sikh Organization of Canada
- [Hope, Gratitude and Solidarity: A Message to Canadians from Religious Leaders in Canada in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) (FR & EN)



Territories:

- [Warning issued for visitors of local church, dental clinic](#) *Whitehorse Daily Star*
- [Nunavut MLA called out for statement about 'two-spirit'](#) *Nunatsiaq News*
- [Leaders detail concerns about COVID-19 impacts on Indigenous populations](#) *National Post*

British Columbia:

- [Daily salute to health-care workers is 'like our virtual hug,' says Burnaby RCMP](#) *Burnaby Now*
- [Surrey Vaisakhi parade cancelled to stop coronavirus spread](#) *Global News*
- [Looking to help? B.C. will now match volunteers with isolated seniors](#) *CTV News*

Alberta:

- [Airdrie faith communities adjust to COVID-19](#) *Airdrie Today*
- ['Just another Indian': Surviving Canada's residential schools](#) *Al Jazeera*
- [Coronavirus: Alberta Facebook groups offering support amid COVID-19 pandemic](#) *Global News*

Prairies:

- [Protecting elders means protecting history: Those most at risk of COVID-19 in Indigenous communities are keepers of treasured knowledge](#) *Winnipeg Free Press*
- [Faith leaders send cross-cultural messages of hope, healing](#) *CBC Manitoba*
- [Families can't go to them, so Ma Mawi staff, volunteers filling needs, stomachs](#) *Winnipeg Free Press*
- [Sask. Court of Appeal sides with Catholic division in school funding case](#) *Regina Leader-Post*

Ontario:

- [Nurse almost brought to tears as Toronto neighbourhood cheers for health-care workers](#) *CTV News*
- ['It's like a rolling high tide that's coming': Indigenous communities prepare for COVID-19](#) *Anglican Journal*
- [YMCA launches Virtual Y to help people work out from home](#) *Sudbury.com*
- [Coronavirus: London acts of kindness abound in a public health emergency](#) *The London Free Press*

Quebec:

- [COVID-19: pas de Pâques dans les églises, tout sur le Web](#) *Le Soleil*
- [La communauté juive Tosh de Boisbriand confinée](#) *Le Devoir*
- [Indigenous voices sing out for healing during COVID-19 pandemic](#) *CTV News*

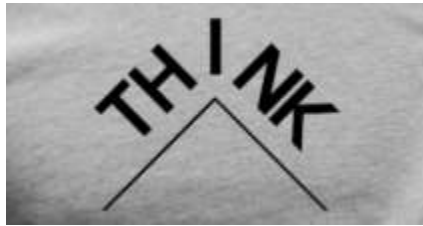
Atlantic provinces:

- [From Amherst with love during difficult times](#) *Cape Breton Post*
- [Province offers gift cards, support hotline to Islanders affected by COVID-19 crisis](#) *CBC PEI*
- [ROSEMARY GODIN: Reconciliation is for all of us](#) *Cape Breton Post*

International:

- [Pope's special Urbi et Orbi blessing: 'God turns everything to our good'](#) *Vatican News*
- [A Special Message from His Holiness the Dalai Lama](#) *The Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama*

- [Saudi tells Muslims to wait on Hajj plans amid coronavirus crisis](#) *Al Jazeera*
 - [COVID-19: BAPS Provides Global Spiritual Continuity During The Coronavirus Pandemic](#) *NBC 5 Dallas-Fort Worth*
 - [Some U.S. religious leaders flout COVID-19 restrictions with large gatherings](#) *CBC News*
 - [Most Americans Say Coronavirus Outbreak Has Impacted Their Lives More than half have prayed for an end to the virus's spread](#) *Pew Research*
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Religious Literacy Thought Corner

Unique to this issue, this list focuses on responses and resources to COVID-19 in relation to religious literacy.

- [Grief in the time of coronavirus: How will the way we mourn change?](#) *The Globe and Mail*
 - [#MuseumWithoutWalls](#) *The Aga Khan Museum*
 - [Why does nature calm anxiety?](#) *The Why Factor, BBC*
 - [How the coronavirus is changing the way we worship](#) *The Religion and Ethics Report, Australia Broadcasting Corporation*
 - [“Spirituality in a Time of Crisis” FB Live Three-Part Interfaith Panel Series](#) *ING*
 - [Impact of the 2019–20 coronavirus pandemic on religion](#) *Wikipedia*
- And, don't forget our [Twitter](#), [FaceBook](#), and [LinkedIn](#) accounts! We are continuously updating threads and posts to analyze COVID-19 through religious literacy too.
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Cultural/Holy days (April & May 2020)

This table describes the dates generally commemorated or observed by many individuals within a community. Some individuals from each community may not adhere to the cultural/holy days themselves. It is not a comprehensive list of cultural/holy days worldwide but a list of those most commonly recognized across parts of Canada.



As the world commemorates many of these important days from home, our team wishes you a rejuvenating time of contemplation and (virtual) community support.

April 2020

- APR 2 – [Rama Navami](#) (Hindus)
- APR 7 – [Hanuman Jayanti](#) (Hindus), [Guru Purnima](#) (Hindus), [Passover](#) begins (until April 13, Jewish people), [Memorial of Christ's Death](#) (Jehovah's Witnesses)
- APR 9 – [Maundy Thursday](#) (various Christian groups)
- APR 10 – [Good Friday](#) (Protestant and Catholic Christians)
- APR 13 – [Easter Sunday](#) (Protestant and Catholic Christians)
- APR 14 – [Vaisakhi/Baisakhi](#) (Sikhs)
- APR 17 – [Good Friday](#) (Orthodox Christians)
- APR 19 – [Easter Sunday](#) (Orthodox Christians)
- APR 20 – [First Day of Ridvan](#) (until May 1, Baha'is)
- APR 22 – [Earth Day](#) (Humanists and various other groups)
- APR 23 – [Ramadan](#) begins (Muslims, until May 23)
- APR 30 – [Vesak](#) or [Buddha Purnima](#) (Mahayana, Theravada, and Riwoche Tibet Buddhists), [Beltane](#) (Wiccans)

May 2020

- MAY 8 – [St. Mark's Feast](#) (Coptic Christians)
- MAY 15 – [Laylat-al-Qadr](#) (various Muslim groups)
- MAY 23 – [Declaration of the Bab](#) (Baha'is)

MAY 23 or 24 – [Eid-ul-Fitr](#) (date depends on Muslim group)

MAY 28 – [Pentecost](#) (Orthodox Christians)

MAY 29 – [Shavuot](#) (until May 30, various Jewish groups), **[Ascension of Bahá u' lláh](#)** (Baha'is)