



September 10, 2024, Washington, DC

"Every rebellion against suffering is fed by the subversive power of remembered suffering." - Johann Baptist Metz

The Apache Stronghold has arrived in Washington, DC after two months following in the footsteps of the Spirit from the West on this Journey of Prayer to deliver their appeal to the Supreme Court to protect their religion, their sacred land, but also to protect all of humanity's spirituality and the earth that is Mother to us all whether we recognize it or not. Dr. Wendsler Nosie, Sr. once told me that to really know how to fight for justice you must go to the places that are suffering to listen and learn. Mother Earth is crying everywhere, not just at Oak Flat, if you have ears to listen and eyes to see. And these cries of Mother Earth are at the same connected to the cries of the oppressed.

When we arrived, Dr. Wendsler Nosie and a few members of the Apache Stronghold were taken to what this country sees as the places of "power" - the Capitol, the Whitehouse, and the Supreme Court. When Dr. Nosie looked across to the Capitol and saw the flag flying that has been flown over the places the U.S. has caused so much pain for his people and the land, he was remembering the suffering. This history of suffering reminds us not only of the truth of the founding of this country on this evil capitalist and colonialist system, but also it reminds us of who we are as humans and our sacred connection to Mother Earth and one another. Dr. Nosie reflected further, "They didn't win. They didn't erase me. We are here now still in the fight to protect our people, Mother Earth and all of human existence from shattering."

As the Apache Stronghold has moved across this country, we have seen signs of hope with communities we met, even from inside churches who are remembering who they are and their connection to Mother Earth. We know this spiritual connection is where real power lies. It is time for people of all religions and spiritual connections to remember who we are and rise up together to protect our Mother Earth and future generations to come. Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador asked, "A church that doesn't provoke any crises, a gospel that doesn't unsettle, a word of God that doesn't get under anyone's skin, a word of God that doesn't touch the real sin of the society in which it is being proclaimed — what gospel is that?" For far too long the evil systems of empire have used churches and religion to undergird its grip of power over the earth destroying her and dehumanizing us all. We are reminded by the words of Gustavo Gutiérrez, "The denunciation of injustice implies the rejection of the use of Christianity to legitimize the established order."

Hear our Prayers:

We rise with the strength of all Creation

Light of Sun

Radiance of Moon

Splendor of Fire

Speed of Lightning

Swiftness of Wind

Firmness of Rock

Stability of Mother Earth

May the spirit of God touch the hearts of all those appointed to the Supreme Court that they might remember the suffering of this land and her people, that they will remember who they are and who they can become again, and that they will not only remember these truths, but that they will now act justly to enact laws to protect Oak Flat, Apache religion, Mother Earth and all Creation.

Amen.

