

Honorable Members of the State of Colorado

February 28, 2018

Christopher Columbus

1451 – 20/May 1506

My Name is James Vecchiarelli, Past 4th Degree Grand Knight (Knights of Columbus)

Past President 2 two year terms, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Catholic Church Men's Club.

College graduate of Front Range CC.\ Served four years in the United States Navy 1967-1971

Why do we continually relive this bill HB18-1231, worded differently but with very little fact that Columbus was responsible for the atrocities. There are no Italians that I am aware of who are proud so of harmful acts that took place 500 years ago. The Italians of America celebrate the fact that Christopher Columbus was Italian and an Explorer, Navigator and a colonizer.

Are the Italians being discriminated against? Because this is the only National Holiday we have in the year, to celebrate a man, who through his discovery, brought the European culture to this new land?

These outrageous actions were the result of the Spanish and Portuguese soldiers that followed years later. As a matter of fact, Columbus found the natives to be, (quotes from his journal)" As I saw they were very friendly to us and perceived that they could be much more easily converted to our holy faith by gentle means than by force". There is in fact proof that Indigenous people committed years of genocide against their own before the European influence.

Aztec indigenous people captured other natives and used them for slavery. In 1450's, they created the institution of ritual war (The Flower War) to have trained warriors thus created the necessity of constant sacrifices to keep the sun moving. (*1) The Sacrifice of war captives was an important part of many of the Aztec religious festivals. (*2)

In the later years 1519 Cortes` allied himself with his long time enemy, the Aztecs and the genocide continued with more human sacrifice.

From 1520 – 1521 an outbreak of Smallpox swept the nation and between 10% - 50% of the population was lost.

More human sacrifices began in 1521 with the Aztecs and the Incas Empire wide spread in Mesoamerican and in South America. (*2)

North America – In Pre-Columbian Mesoamerica, the most common forms of Slavery were those of prisoners of war and debtors. (*3) Most victims of human sacrifice were prisoners of war or slaves. From Alaska to California, slavery was hereditary. (*4)

Many Native American tribes did enslave small numbers of captives in the Southwest United States and some were sold to Hispanic residents. In at least one instance the San Luis Valley Colorado a female house hold continued (*5) in her status long after the emancipation Proclamation.

Maybe it would be a promising idea, for our Native American friends to look at their own history before pointing fingers at others. No one should blame anyone today for actions taken 500 years ago.

References:

- (*1) Isaac, Barry L. (1983) "The Aztec Flower War" A Geopolitical Explanation Journal of Anthropological research 39
- (*2) Hassig, Ross. "Moteuczomah Illhuicamina" Aztec warfare: Imperial Expansion and political control. Norman: University of Oklahoma 1988. 158. Print
- (*3) Wikipedia: Slavery among the Indigenous people of America
- (*4) "Human Sacrifice" Britannica concise encyclopedia
- (*5) Explore – Old – West Colorado.com copyright 2010 - 2017