

BUILDING INDIGENOUS RELATIONS

NOVEMBER 2024 ON-LINE NEWSLETTER

Ontario Provincial Council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada

Each September 30 we are reminded of our role in the reconciliation journey with Indigenous peoples. How do we recognize the significance of Orange Shirt Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation? What is our response to the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission? What is our role in supporting Indigenous communities?



On September 30, the city of Toronto's Spirit Garden was opened. The Spirit Garden project was led by Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre in partnership with the City of Toronto. The project responds in part to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Call to Action 82, for government to commission and install a Residential Schools

Monument in each capital city to honour residential school survivors, and all the children lost to their families and communities. Does your community have a Residential Schools Monument and do you know where it is? If you plan on attending the 2025 National Convention in August 2025, you can visit the Spirit Garden as it is very near to the host hotel. (photo courtesy of Theresa Lubowitz) More information on the Spirit Garden is available at on the [City of Toronto's](#) and

[Toronto Council Fire's](#) webpages.

As you continue to plan your council's calendar year, keep these dates in mind as additional way to support the reconciliation journey:

November 4-10 is Treaty Recognition Week in Ontario. In 2016, Ontario passed the first legislation of its kind in Canada declaring the first full week of November as Treaties Recognition Week. Resources and information can be found at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/treaties-recognition-week>

December 12th is the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe and the Church in Canada celebrates National Day of Prayer in Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples. The annual message from the Catholic Bishops of Canada will be available in late November. Resources: <https://www.cccb.ca/indigenous-peoples/prayer-and-spirituality/national-day-of-prayer-in-solidarity-with-indigenous-people/> Councils may wish to also visit the Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle website: <https://ourladyofguadalupecircle.ca/>

January 4, 2025 is National Ribbon Skirt Day. This day was created by the passing of Bill S-219 on December 15, 2022. The national day came to be after 10-year-old Isabella Kulak was shamed back in December 2020 for wearing a ribbon skirt to her school's formal day. Further information is available at <https://ccdi.ca/blog/celebrating-national-ribbon-skirt-day/>

On 8 February 2023, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops issued four pastoral letters on reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. Intended as a framework for local engagement with Indigenous Peoples, the letters are the fruit of many months of listening, encounter, and dialogue with them. They make for an excellent resource for council reflection and can be found at <https://www.cccb.ca/indigenous-peoples/that-we-may-walk-together-series-of-pastoral-letters-2023/>

Councils may also wish to make a personal commitment to continue their work of reconciliation by using this form available from <https://www.beaconnectr.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Personal-Commitment.pdf>

"(The Church is) Where we look one another in the eye, accept the other's history and culture, and allow the mystique of togetherness, so pleasing to the Holy Spirit, to foster the healing of wounded memories" (Meeting of Pope Francis with the Indigenous Peoples and members of the parish community at the Sacred Heart Church, Edmonton, July 25, 2022).

Let's continue as members to continue this journey of encounter and reconciliation.

Submitted by OPC Service Chair, Sue Lubowitz