

National Indigenous Peoples Day

June 21

#NIPD2026



Canada

Walking in Sisterhood and Truth

This National Indigenous Peoples Day, councils gather to honour the rich cultures, spiritual traditions, and profound resilience of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. As a people of faith, we view this journey of reconciliation through the **Sacred Heart of Jesus**—the ultimate font of divine mercy, healing, and radical love.

"The native peoples of Canada... have a right to their own culture and religious traditions... Christ, in the mystery of his Incarnation, embraces all cultures, desires to find a home in them, and expects his followers to respect the right of every person and culture to authentic development." — Pope John Paul II, Address to the Indigenous Peoples of Canada Fort Simpson, 1987

The Sacred Heart is often depicted as wounded, yet burning with unconditional love. This image speaks directly to our history. For too long, the dignity of Indigenous peoples was obscured by systemic harms and historical injustice. As we look upon Christ's open heart, we find the courage to face these painful truths. We pray that His mercy heals the intergenerational wounds carried by our Indigenous brothers and sisters.

Over a century ago, Pope Leo XIII dedicated the entire human race to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and reminded the world that when we treat others as inferior, we forget our "original brotherhood." True devotion to Christ's Heart requires us to actively reject domination. It forces us to see the image of the Creator beautifully reflected in Indigenous languages, ancestral traditions, and deep connections to the land.

True solidarity means listening. As the Holy Father recently reminded us in his Jubilee Message, Indigenous cultures hold "an irreplaceable place in the magnificent

choir" of humanity. A choir is not made of uniform voices, but of distinct, beautiful harmonies. Christ's Heart does not dissolve our cultural differences; it unites them in a grand tapestry of love.

We also look to Indigenous elders and knowledge keepers for guidance on how to heal our broken relationship with the earth. Pope Leo XIV has consistently urged the global community to adopt the ecological wisdom of ancestral traditions. Caring for creation is an outward expression of gratitude to the Heart of the Creator.

As Catholic Women's League members let us commit to being instruments of reconciliation. Here are concrete, faith-filled actions your council can take to move from reflection to meaningful solidarity:

1. Listen and Learn

- **Read the TRC Calls to Action (again):** Review the 94 Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, paying special attention to the roles outlined for faith communities.
- **Host an educational night:** Invite an Indigenous elder, knowledge keeper, or educator to speak to your council about local history, treaties, and traditions.
- **Support Indigenous creators:** Read books, watch documentaries, or listen to podcasts created by First Nations, Inuit, and Métis storytellers.

2. Pray and Reflect

- **Incorporate land acknowledgments:** Begin council meetings by respectfully acknowledging the traditional Indigenous territories where we meet.
- **Offer intentional prayers:** Include specific intentions for healing, justice, and missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people (MMIWG2S) during your regular prayer services.
- **Observe Orange Shirt Day:** Participate collectively in the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30 by wearing orange and reflecting on the legacy of the residential school system.

3. Build Relationships and Invest

- **Support Indigenous-owned businesses:** Commit to purchasing goods, catering, or services from local Indigenous entrepreneurs for parish events.
- **Donate to healing initiatives:** Direct community fundraising efforts toward the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund or local grassroots organizations focused on cultural revitalization. (to donate <https://irfund.ca/en/donate/>)
- **Show up at community events:** Attend public powwows, cultural festivals, and National Indigenous Peoples Day celebrations to listen, learn, and celebrate alongside our neighbors.

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