



A DAY OF ADORATION  
AND PRAYER FOR  
HEALING AND  
RECONCILIATION

St. Patrick's Parish - Markham  
Prayer Guide

Today is the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, also known as Orange Shirt Day. This day recognizes the injustices suffered by our Indigenous brothers and sisters because of the residential school system in Canada as well as decades of systemic inequalities experienced by many Indigenous Canadians. We remember the lives of the children who died at these institutions and the intergenerational harm that flowed from this unjust system. With humble and contrite hearts, we acknowledge the role that the Catholic Church has played in this tragedy; yet we remain hopeful that we will find healing in the Merciful Heart of Jesus. We thank you for joining us as we begin this day of prayer for reconciliation and healing for all those whose lives were lost and all others who have been impacted by the legacy of residential schools in Canada.

## A GUIDE FOR PRAYER

1. Begin with the Sign of the Cross.
2. Pray the **Opening Prayer**.
3. Spend a few moments in silence.
4. Read and reflect on an area of focus from the 94 Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report. Pray for the work that has to be done to bring healing and reconciliation.
5. Spend time in silent prayer and allow the Lord to speak to your heart.
6. Seek the intercession of **St. Joseph, our Solace in Suffering** and **Our Mother of Perpetual Help** through the prayers provided.
7. Conclude with the **Closing Prayer**.

## OPENING PRAYER

Ever Loving, Merciful and forgiving Father, we come to you on behalf of your beloved children whose lives were lost as a result of the tragedy and injustice inflicted by the residential school system in Canada and the inter-generational effects that have harmed so many of our indigenous brothers and sisters.

Through the intercession of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, her beloved spouse Saint Joseph, patron Saint of Canada, and St. Kateri Tekakwitha, we ask for forgiveness and pray for healing for the families and all those affected by the role of the residential school legacy. We

also pray for the healing of the religious institutions and the Canadian Government who were all instrumental in this injustice.

We pray for the departed souls, for those still traumatized because of this tragedy, especially for those who suffered the loss of children and their loved ones.

Father, touch the hearts and minds of those who are unable to forgive, fill them with your love. Pour your healing balm on them and set them free so they will be able to move ahead and fulfill the plan and purpose you have for their lives.

Give them the grace to know you in a deeper way so that even amid challenges, burdens and pain they can be bearers of your love and light.

We pray for our government, religious leaders, educators and all those involved in the administration and operation of the residential schools. Father, you said in your Word "All things work together for a good for those who love the Lord and are called according to His purpose."

Father, we are all called to know, love and serve you. Fill us to overflowing with your gift of love, peace and hope. As we the people of Canada look to the future, heal our land, help us to live as one nation and to embrace one another regardless of difference of opinion, race, creed, culture or religion.

Father, give us the wisdom to remember that we are all created by you, and that as brothers and sisters in Christ, may we see Your Son, Jesus, reflected in one another.

Father, we praise and thank you for hearing and answering our prayers in the name of your Son Jesus, through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## ST. JOSEPH, OUR SOLACE IN SUFFERING

Compassionate Joseph, one with us in our human condition, together with Mary and Jesus you experience exile, hunger and violence. Refusing vengeance, you choose mercy. Your forgiveness breaks the circle of violence. Through your goodness, God's hope for our humanity is preserved. Joy is yours, for the Kingdom of God is your inheritance.

Open our compassionate hands in times of war, famine and exile. Keep us from developing a victim's mentality, and make our pain a source of growth. Sustain us in fulfilling our responsibility of cultivating inner peace, joy and serenity. In your wisdom, counsel us to close all doors to bitterness, so that, watched over by God, we may dance for joy. Amen.

# OUR MOTHER OF PERPETUAL HELP

Mother of Perpetual Help, today we face so many difficulties. Your picture tells us so much about you. It reminds us to reach out and help those in need. Help us understand that our lives belong to others as much as they belong to us.

Mary, Model of Christian love, we know we cannot heal every ill or solve every problem. But with God's grace, we intend to do what we can. May we be true witnesses to the world that love for one another really matters. May our daily actions proclaim how fully our lives are modeled after yours, Mother of Perpetual Help. **Amen.**

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## PRAYING FOR HEALING AND RECONCILIATION

Reflect on one or more of the following areas of focus from the 94 Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report. Each section will provide the Call to Action followed by a Call to Prayer.

### CHILD WELFARE

**CALL TO ACTION #1:** We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to commit to reducing the number of Aboriginal children in care by:

- i. Monitoring and assessing neglect investigations.
- ii. Providing adequate resources to enable Aboriginal communities and child-welfare organizations to keep Aboriginal families together where it is safe to do so, and to keep children in culturally appropriate environments, regardless of where they reside.
- iii. Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the history and impacts of residential schools.
- iv. Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the potential for Aboriginal communities and families to provide more appropriate solutions to family healing.
- v. Requiring that all child-welfare decisions makers consider the impact of the residential school experience on children and their caregivers.

**LET US PRAY:** We call upon You, our Father God, the Lord who loves children, and teaches us to “Let the little children come to me” (Mt 19:14). Children are important to You and are created in Your image. We ask that You protect children, and in particular, the vulnerable ones in our communities. Please open our eyes to the distress many are in. Open our hearts to love them the way You love them. Give us courage to do something that will make a difference in the lives of children who are powerless to protect themselves. If we are not engaged and interacting with children in need, please show us how we can. May we as individuals, as families, and as the body of Christ intentionally love and advocate for the children. We also ask that You will give great wisdom and compassion to all levels of government as they make decisions regarding the welfare of our children. Amen.

## EDUCATION

**CALL TO ACTION #63:** We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including:

- i. Developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.
- ii. Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history.
- iii. Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.
- iv. Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above.

**LET US PRAY:** Father God, transformative education only happens when people are fully committed to it. We ask, Lord, that Canada will maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues. We ask that policymakers, curriculum developers, and educators will pursue excellence in their calling to teach the next generation. We thank You for the thousands of teachers in Canada who teach because they want to influence the next generation. Please give them the wisdom and perseverance to pursue excellence and to be role models for their students to follow when implementing new initiatives related to Aboriginal education. We pray that as teachers and students embrace new resources and curriculum, they will subsequently influence their community and create a positive ripple effect of intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect. Amen.

## LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

**CALL TO ACTION #17:** We call upon all levels of government to enable residential school survivors and their families to reclaim names changed by the residential school system by waiving administrative costs for a period of five years for the name-change process and the revision of official identity documents, such as birth certificates, passports, driver's licenses, health cards, status cards, and social insurance numbers.

**LET US PRAY:** Father God, we lament the fact that the residential school system did not respect the significance of a person's name. We see throughout Scripture that a person's name signifies their identity, worth, character, reputation, authority, will, and ownership; and we learn that names are significant to You. Please forgive the ignorance that contributed to the pain and oppression of Aboriginal peoples. As Aboriginal people return to their original names and set out to claim their identity, may they also experience Your love and acceptance of them. Help them understand that You love them and their name. May those in Canada who are not Aboriginal take the time and effort to learn how to say the names and spell the names of those we encounter and know. Through the use of their original names, may they feel honoured. Amen.

## HEALTH

**CALL TO ACTION #19:** We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and to publish annual progress reports and assess long-term trends. Such efforts would focus on indicators such as: infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic disease, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate services.

**LET US PRAY:** Father God, we are disheartened that many Aboriginal people in Canada are living in deplorable conditions. Please forgive us for taking pride in our high rank of "most livable" place to live, while ignoring the situation of many Aboriginal people. We ask that those in health leadership will develop measurable goals, so we will know where success is happening and where more work is needed. We ask that the underlying issues that are causing these significant

health issues will be addressed. For those in Your Church who are in the medical field, we pray that they will model the compassion of Jesus towards those who need healing, and that perseverance to help all of their patients will follow. May trust build between the Aboriginal community and the medical community. Amen.

## JUSTICE

**CALL TO ACTION #38:** We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial and Aboriginal governments to commit to eliminating the overrepresentation of Aboriginal youth in custody over the next decade.

**LET US PRAY:** Father God, we grieve with Aboriginal families for the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in custody. We grieve that there is a correlation between children placed in the care of child-welfare agencies and the youth in the justice system. We pray that You will give the governments, churches, and other community organizations wisdom and determination to support Aboriginal families as they seek to alleviate the cycle of poverty many find themselves in. Move the hearts of Your followers to come alongside aboriginal youth who are currently incarcerated (as well as those at risk of detention) and show them Your love. Help these young people see the potential they have. Help them understand that they are made in Your image. Open their eyes to the opportunities around them. May we as a community also work to create opportunities for them. Amen.

## RECONCILIATION

**CALL TO ACTION #58:** We call upon the Pope to issue an apology to Survivors, their families and communities for the Roman Catholic Church's role in the spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical and sexual abuse of First Nations, Inuit and Métis children in the Catholic-run residential schools. We call for that apology to be similar to the 2010 apology issued to Irish victims of abuse and to occur within one year of the issuing of this Report and to be delivered by the Pope in Canada.

**LET US PRAY:** Father God, today we bring the Catholic Church before You. We pray that godly sorrow over what has occurred will generate an earnest desire to continue to make things right. We pray, Lord, that the Pope will be moved to extend a specific apology, here in Canada, to all who have been victimized through Catholic-run

residential schools. May those who have been victimized by the residential school system receive a sense of healing, peace, and freedom from pain that comes through forgiveness. Amen.

**CALL TO ACTION #59:** We call upon church parties to the Settlement Agreement to develop ongoing education strategies to ensure that their respective congregations learn about the church's role in colonization, the history and legacy of residential schools, and why apologies to former residential school students, their families and communities were necessary.

**LET US PRAY:** Father God, we humbly repent for the historical role churches in Canada played in destroying Aboriginal culture. We pray that going forward, the Church in Canada will be known as transformational history-makers in reconciliation and restoration. As members of Your Church educate their congregations, we ask that it will be a time of renewal as the Church seeks Your face and, in humility, we will all be led towards healing in this land. We ask, Lord, that all churches in Canada and their members will choose to live lives that reflect the love and humility of Christ, and that You will receive honour as true reconciliation occurs. We ask that people in Canada, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, will trust in and see You for who You truly are. Amen.

**CALL TO ACTION #60:** We call upon leaders of the church parties to the Settlement Agreement and all other faiths, in collaboration with Indigenous spiritual leaders, Survivors, schools of theology, seminaries and other religious training centres, to develop and teach curriculum for all student clergy and staff who work in Aboriginal communities, on the need to respect Indigenous spirituality in its own right, the history and legacy of residential schools and the roles of the church parties in that system, the history and legacy of religious conflict in Aboriginal families and communities, and the responsibility that churches have to mitigate such conflicts and prevent spiritual violence.

**LET US PRAY:** Father God, We bring before you today all universities that exist for Your glory. We ask that they will be able to create an overall plan that ensures all students will have a deep respect for Aboriginal people and their cultures. We ask, Lord, that our universities and seminaries will be places where Aboriginal students will feel welcomed and at home. Please develop leaders, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, who have a deep passion for the work of reconciliation that is before Canada. Please expand the good work

that is already being done, and give the faculty, administration, and the students courageous wisdom as they build relationships throughout Canada. Amen.

**CALL TO ACTION #61:** We call upon church parties to the Settlement Agreement, in collaboration with Survivors and representatives of Aboriginal organizations, to establish permanent funding to Aboriginal People for:

- i) Community-controlled healing and reconciliation projects.
- ii) Community-controlled culture and language revitalization projects.
- iii) Community-controlled education and relationship building projects.
- iv) Regional dialogues for Indigenous spiritual leaders and youth to discuss spirituality, self-determination, and reconciliation.

Father God, we recognize that the responsibility of reconciliation is not only at the government level, but also at the community level. We thank You for this because it means all people can be involved in the important work of reconciliation. We acknowledge that as followers of Christ, we are one Body, following Your lead (Ephesians 4:16; Romans 12:5). Please give us a spirit of generosity and dedicated commitment to establish permanent funding to Aboriginal people for the work of reconciliation, revitalization, relationship building, and regional dialog projects. We ask that Your Holy Spirit will powerfully move within all of these funded projects. Help people to witness Your love and compassion through the reconciling work of the Church. We pray that You will foster forgiveness in order to build restored relationships of trust. Amen.

ADAPTED FROM: Truth and Reconciliation Prayer Guide (<https://www.cmacan.org/trc-prayer-guide/>)

## CLOSING PRAYER

O God, Creator and Father of all, with humility we your children acknowledge the relationship of all living things.

For this we thank you, we praise you and we worship you. We call on you, Great Mystery, the Word made Flesh – our teacher, prophet and brother – to open our hearts to all our brothers and sisters, and with them to grow in the wisdom, honesty, courage and respectfulness shown in The Sacred Teachings.

Give us the vision and honesty to recognize that the we are all brothers and sisters of one human family, created and sustained by the One Creator.

As we deal with many challenges, may we never give way to fear and anger, which can be the source of division and threat amongst peoples.

We look to how God always gives to us, as a remedy for sins of prejudice and intolerance. We see in God the Creator of all things, One who always provides and is generous – even given the abuses we have heaped on one another and on the earth.

We see in the Son, Jesus Christ - the innocent Victim who pours His life blood out from the Cross for all peoples.

We see how the Holy Spirit is God's gift, alive in our world today – inspiring vision and hope that we can have the same mind and heart of God!

May Your Spirit bless all the souls who died at residential schools. May this same Spirit also bring blessing and healing to all families and communities affected in any way by the schools.

O Creator, show us the way to healing, forgiveness and reconciliation and a renewed fellowship.

Amen.

*ST. KATERI TEKAKWITHA, PRAY FOR US.*

*ST. JOSEPH, OUR SOLACE IN SUFFERING PRAY FOR US.*

*OUR MOTHER OF PERPETUAL HELP, PRAY FOR US.*

# BENEATH THE SHADE OF THE PINE TREES

A POEM WRITTEN BY DANIELLE LAMB

Beneath the shade of pine trees, blanketed with snow  
The remains of little ones rest silently in a row.

Years long past, a memory without a name  
New growth sprung forth conceals a nation's shame.

Yet their mothers' cries still ring in the cold  
Unmarked graves reveal secrets untold.

The arrogance of men who grasp and who take  
False gods of ourselves we did so often make.

The refusal to listen, to love, or to bend  
Has left us with a wound not easy to mend.

We have squandered Your graces, our inheritance we spent  
Sorrowful, empty handed, with remorse we lament.

Which way forward, what are we to do?  
But turn to Him who can make all things new.

And to our Holy Mother so meek and so mild  
For in her heart rests the soul of each and every child.

Heal our pain, to the hurting bring reprieve  
Justice to the wronged and let all hearts grieve.

Beneath the shade of pine trees, graves covered in moss  
We cry 'Lord have mercy!' and remember the Cross.

*"If one member suffers, all  
suffer together with it"*

1 CORINTHIANS 12:26