

# MISSION INTENTIONS

MARCH

2022-2023

We pray for those who have suffered harm from Church members; may they find within the Church a real response to their pain and suffering.

## Country Focus: Canada

Catholicism came to Canada about 400 years ago, with the arrival of the European colonizers in the 1600's. Many of the first Catholic missionaries were from French religious congregations who founded schools, opened seminaries, and set up hospitals to help them spread the Gospel. Today, Canada has 60 dioceses and almost 11 million Catholics.



Sadly, not all Catholic missionaries were good representatives of the Gospel. For decades, members of the Church operated government-funded boarding schools that many Indigenous children were forced to attend. These schools separated families, forbade Indigenous languages and cultures, and led to many forms of abuse. Pope Francis traveled to Canada in 2022 to apologize for these sins, which he called “a disastrous error, incompatible with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.” Let us join the Holy Father in prayer this month for all who have been hurt by Church members.

## Leading to Knowledge of the Faith

One of the ways the Church is working toward healing with the Native American community is through the merging of Native American culture and the celebration of the Gospel. We will learn more about this on page two. As the USCCB says in its 2019 report, Two Rivers: A Report on Catholic Native American Culture and Ministry, this work is important because “*With a deeper understanding of the Native American Catholic communities, we, as a Church, are better able to unify both the faith and the cultures that guide Catholic Native American ministry into a great gift to Christ and his Church.*”

## Saint Spotlight

## Saint Raphael the Archangel

An archangel is one of God's principle messengers, given the most important messages to deliver to humans. Scripture tells us there are seven archangels who stand before the Lord, but only three of them are named in the Bible: Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael. Saint Raphael, known for his healing powers (the name Raphael means “God heals”), is our Saint Spotlight focus this month.



We learn about Saint Raphael the Archangel in the Old Testament Book of Tobit. Disguised as a human named Azariah, Saint Raphael the Archangel meets Tobit's son, Tobiah, and agrees to guide him on a journey to find a healing

fish that will cure Tobit's blindness. On their way, Tobiah meets and falls in love with a woman named Sarah, who is plagued by a demon. Saint Raphael the Archangel helps Tobiah and Sarah defeat the demon so that they can wed. Once married, they safely return to Tobit's house, where they use the fish to successfully heal Tobit's blindness. Only after Tobit and Sarah have been healed, and at a feast celebrating Tobiah's and Sarah's marriage, does Saint Raphael reveal himself as an archangel.

We celebrate Saints Raphael, Gabriel and Michael, the archangels, each year on September 29. Saint Raphael the Archangel, pray for us!

## Formation for Life in Christ

Catholic social teaching tells us how to live the Gospel. It helps us be in right relationship with one another. Based on the foundation that all human life is sacred because we were all made in God's image and likeness, Catholic social teaching reminds us to always put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.

Sadly, throughout history, some Church members have failed to do so. One example of Church members causing harm to others was mentioned on the first page of this newsletter. Although we spoke of Canada's history of Indian boarding schools, the U.S. also had similar policies toward our

First Nation peoples. Like in Canada, some Church members helped run government-funded boarding schools for Native American children here in the

U.S. And, like in Canada, students were separated from their families, were not allowed to speak their native language or practice their culture, and sometimes experienced various forms of abuse.

However, in recent years, the Church has started to work with the U.S. government and First Nations peoples so that all those affected by

the boarding schools are able to find healing. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has begun acknowledging the role of Church members in boarding school abuses, and is turning over its records to agencies investigating the history and consequences of the boarding schools.

Our own archdiocese is also working to acknowledge its role in running boarding schools. Archdiocesan employees, on behalf of the Minnesota Catholic Conference, the public policy voice of the local Church, are looking for records related to the boarding schools the



Archdiocese operated in Minnesota so they can be shared with local tribal nations to help with the process of reconciliation.

The Church is also looking for ways to

help incorporate Native American language, instruments, symbols, and other aspects of Indigenous culture into the Catholic liturgy. In this month's video, we will learn how incorporating cultural elements into Mass can help our First Nations peoples heal from the trauma they have suffered from Church members.

## Celebrating the Mystery

Oftentimes, we speak of the Sacrament of Penance in individual terms: when one person sins, that person goes to confession to receive forgiveness and be restored to God and the Church. But when individual sin isn't addressed promptly, and is multiplied by the sins of others, it can create structural sin that becomes part of society, like poverty, or Indian boarding schools. When this happens, all members of the Church must act as a whole to work toward reconciliation so that those who have been hurt can experience God's healing love. The Sacrament of Penance absolves us of our sin, but it does not repair the harm the sin caused. We must act to repair that harm, so that we can be better instruments of Christ's love.

### Teaching Prayer: The Mass

The Mass is the most important prayer of the Catholic Church. It is where we receive the Eucharist, and it is what gives us strength to be good witnesses of Christ during the week. In this archdiocese, we have a parish that ministers to American Indian Roman Catholics: the Church of Gichitwaa Kateri. Consider attending Mass there to experience Native American Catholicism.

To learn more, [click here](#)>>.

## Native American Catholic Community, Click Here>>



- ✚ How does using elements of Native American culture help First Nation Catholics feel like they belong to the Church community?
- ✚ How does including these elements help us all live in community?

- ✚ Why is it important for the Church to acknowledge past harms caused by boarding schools? How does this help build up the community?