



June 27, 2021

## STATEMENT ON THE VANDALISM – SAINT JOHN PAUL II

Statement issued on behalf of **Most Reverend Richard Smith**, Archbishop,  
Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton

*We are saddened by the vandalism of the statue of Saint John Paul II at Holy Rosary parish. At a time when our country is acutely aware of the need for reconciliation with the Indigenous Peoples of this land, it is helpful to recall the words with which Pope John Paul II, during his 1987 visit to Fort Simpson, strongly affirmed the inherent goodness of Indigenous culture and traditions, and expressed solidarity with the First Nations, Metis and Innu Peoples in defense of their rights: “my coming among you looks back to your past in order to proclaim your dignity and support your destiny.”*

*Today I repeat those words to you, and to all the Aboriginal peoples of Canada and of the world. The Church extols the equal human dignity of all peoples and defends their right to uphold their own cultural character with its distinct traditions and customs.*

*The parishioners of Holy Rosary parish, and the people of the Archdiocese of Edmonton, stand with the Indigenous Peoples in this moment of profound sorrow. With them, we lament the sad legacy of residential schools and look forward to the healing of our relationships.*

*May the Creator help all of us to give expression to our grief in a way that builds up and heals, and place us all on the right path of truth and reconciliation.*

*For further information about the address His Holiness delivered in September 1987, please refer to the following [link](#).*

Contact:



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