


*Desiree Orvis is a Red River Métis Youth from Kinosota, Manitoba, who is an all-around athlete and active student in her final year at Alonsa Community School. She enjoys spending her free time riding her horse and giving sleigh rides to friends and family in the winter. Desiree is a strong role model for other youth of the Métis Nation, participating in Métis governance through the regional youth advisory committee and excelling in traditional practices like jigging and fiddle-playing. She is a member of her church choir and regularly lends her musical talent to funerals and Remembrance Day events in her area. As the granddaughter of a day school survivor and the great-granddaughter of a residential school survivor, Desiree hopes to represent their experiences and pain with His Holiness, as well as highlighting the strength and resilience of the women in her family.*

*Statement to His Holiness by Youth Desiree Orvis:*

*Holy Father, I thank you for the opportunity to share what is in my heart today. I am here to represent the youth of the Red River Métis as well as representing the strength and resilience of the women in my family.*

*As the granddaughter of a day school survivor and the great-granddaughter of a residential school survivor, I have been saddened by the pain and hurt I see when my grandmother and great-grandmother speak about their experiences in these institutions. Despite their pain and grief, I am proud to say that they are both strong and resilient women, who have maintained their faith in our Lord and have gifted me with their great love and affection. I know that your apology on behalf of the individuals who betrayed the trust of God and the church by harming children will help them continue to heal and support their long-standing faith in the compassion of our Lord.*

*Like other youth of faith, I am concerned by the dwindling number of youth in our churches, regardless of denomination. While I cannot speak for all youth of faith, I would like to humbly encourage churches to use the medium of music to inspire more young people to engage with the church and explore their relationship with God.*



*As a proud Red River Métis woman, I know that music has played a key role in my relationship with my community and is one of the ways I express my faith. Our people are very musically inclined, and no gathering is complete without celebrating our unity and our culture. Hearing a fiddle play the Red River Métis jig or any of our traditional songs, or seeing our youth dance in our traditional style affirms that I am with my people and that we are giving joy to our community.*

*I know that when I play the fiddle, I feel a great sense of joy knowing that I am carrying on a tradition that was passed down to me by my grandfather and great-grandfather, who are both Red River Métis fiddlers. Music helps me connect with my family and our ancestors, and I believe it represents a pathway into the hearts and minds of other youth.*

*Like the other delegates you have been hearing from today, I know that it is my responsibility to carry your message and the message of God to my community when I return home. I ask for your blessing to help me express myself in a good way — a way that inspires Youth to reflect on their relationship with God and renew their interest in attending services, an act which I have always drawn comfort from.*

*I thank you, Most Holy Father, for listening to my words and allowing me the time to speak on behalf of my Nation.*