



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## President Shelly issues Navajo Nation Prayer Day Proclamation



WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.— The changing of the seasons is a holy time of year.

On March 20, the spring equinox will once again appear and signal the time of change ahead, as our weather warms and crops are planted for the coming harvest season.

In observance of this, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly has issued a proclamation in observance of *Il Hodayin Biji*, or Navajo Nation Prayer Day.

President Shelly signed the proclamation on the morning of March 16 at the Office of the President and Vice President.

“We have hosted Prayer Day and Spirituality Day events throughout our administration, in conjunction with the changing of the seasons,” President Shelly said. “The public is invited to join us for a day of prayer and reverence, as we welcome spring.”

President Shelly explained

that Navajo Nation Prayer Day is a time to spend with family and loved ones, to renew bonds and strengthen family ties.

Having a solid foundation of love and respect at the family level will only strengthen the Navajo Nation as a whole, he added, because those values set the tone for Navajo society.

“We must renew our traditional values and incorporate that into the lives of our children, grandchildren and future generations, or else we run the risk of losing those sacred teachings forever,” President Shelly said.

The proclamation speaks to *Dine’ Bi Beenahaz’aani*, Navajo Fundamental Law, and its importance in providing spiritual guidance to the Navajo Nation. It also states that the incorporation of Navajo teachings such as *Siihasin*, *K’é*, and *Sodizin* will help the Navajo Nation overcome substance

abuse and other social ills creating disharmony.

Navajo Nation Prayer Day activities will take place at the powwow grounds in Window Rock on March 19, beginning at 8 a.m. for the opening ceremony.

The Tsehootsooi Twin Warriors Society will provide color guard duties. Jesse Kaulaity and Leroy Becenti will sing a Flag Song in honor of the flags. Tom White, Sr. will provide the invocation.

The remainder of the day will be arrangement of the ceremonial grounds, as teepees are erected and prepared for the evening ceremonies.

Members of the Diné American Church and Azee’ Bee Nahagha will be in attendance for the peyote meetings that will be conducted in six teepees.

Conducting the peyote meetings will be Native American Church leaders Leroy Becenti, Kirk Arviso, Dale

Gonnie, Thomas Walker Jr., and Gerald King.

At 6 p.m., Navajo Nation Vice President Rex Lee Jim will provide the welcome address and explain the importance and meaning behind the change of season. At 7 p.m., the Native American Church peyote meetings will begin.

On March 20, the event will conclude with a continental breakfast, keynote address by President Shelly and free lunch.

Navajo Nation Prayer Day is a drug and alcohol free event. Participants are asked to respect others during the event and no recording of prayer songs is allowed.

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