



WILLIAM T. MCGRATTAN

BISHOP *of* CALGARY

February 15, 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings of peace on this Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time.

I have asked the parishes to read this pastoral letter at all the Masses this weekend to inform you of our participation as a diocese in the national, regional, and local efforts of the Bishops of Canada and to seek your support in addressing the enduring impact of the Canadian Residential School system on Indigenous Peoples, their families, communities, culture, and identity.

Over the years, the various parties, the government, and other religious denominations including the Catholic entities who were involved in the operation of these schools have extended their apologies for the damage and harm caused by the system, the schools, and more importantly for their participation in it.

The Bishops of Canada at the Plenary in September of last year extended an unequivocal apology for the participation of the religious communities and dioceses in the system “which led to the suppression of Indigenous languages, culture and spirituality, failing to respect the rich history, traditions and wisdom of Indigenous Peoples” and the “grave abuses that were committed by some members of our Catholic community.” (*Statement of Apology*, September 24, 2021)

Among other initiatives, as a concrete expression of solidarity and the commitment to the process of justice and reconciliation, the Bishops of Canada announced a \$30-million national pledge for an *Indigenous Reconciliation Fund* that will support the following priorities

- healing and reconciliation for communities and families;
- culture and language revitalization;
- education and community building; and
- dialogues for promoting Indigenous spirituality and culture.

As a contribution to the national pledge, the Diocese of Calgary is committed to raising \$600,000 each year for the next five years through the annual diocesan campaign, *Together in Action*. The total amount of \$3 million will be designated to support indigenous-led initiatives in the Diocese.

In addition, I am committed to allocating \$500,000 this year to support our Canadian northern mission dioceses in the healing and reconciliation initiatives within their own Indigenous communities. This will bring the total financial contribution of the Diocese to \$3.5 million over the period of five years.

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The introduction of this new priority in the diocesan campaign reminds us of our mission as a local church to support the path of justice and healing with Indigenous Peoples. It will raise our awareness and move us to recognize that this is one of our important pastoral priorities as Catholics and as Canadians.

To promote transparency, a local Diocesan Reconciliation Committee will be established in the Diocese with Indigenous representation. The committee will oversee and manage the applications for funding in coordination with the Board of Directors of the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund on the national level.

This commitment of the Church involves fundraising but must not be limited to it. Such financial support is necessary to facilitate justice and healing through our formal relationships and partnerships with the Indigenous Peoples.

As the Bishop of Calgary, I encourage you to participate in our work as a diocese towards reconciliation with our Indigenous brothers and sisters firstly through solidarity in prayer, through involvement in initiatives that promote justice and healing, through friendships with Indigenous Peoples on a personal level, and through financial donations made to Together in Action.

As always, we turn to Mary, Patron of our Diocese, to intercede for us in these efforts and to open for us the true path of healing and reconciliation through the Spirit, which is at the heart of being a synodal church of communion, participation, and mission.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



†William T. McGrattan
Bishop of Calgary