



### **My Apology to the Indigenous Peoples of this Land**

On 24 September 2021, at the conclusion of our Plenary Assembly, the Bishops of Canada issued a statement to you, the Indigenous Peoples of this land, acknowledging the suffering of those who attended Canada's Indian Residential Schools as well as the intergenerational trauma and the tragic legacy of suffering that Indigenous people continue to experience. The whole system of the residential schools did not respect the languages, culture and spirituality of Indigenous Peoples but sought rather to suppress them. The Bishops acknowledge that the Catholic religious orders and dioceses which ran these schools participated in this system, and that terrible abuses were committed in them by some of these Catholics. In their statement, the Catholic Bishops of Canada express their profound remorse and apologize unequivocally.

In solidarity with the Bishops of Canada, I too want to acknowledge the grave harm afflicted on you, the Indigenous Peoples of this land, to express to you my profound sorrow and to offer my own unequivocal apology to you. With the Bishops of Canada, I am committed to the process of healing and reconciliation across the country and here in the Diocese of London.

As an expression of our continuing commitment to healing and reconciliation, we will take the following actions in the Diocese of London:

1. **Conversations with local Indigenous communities:** We will continue conversations that have already been taking place with band members at Walpole Island and Aamjiwnaang First Nation. These conversations and others give us an opportunity to learn from local Indigenous communities how best we can journey with them on the road of truth and reconciliation and could also provide a platform for educational opportunities.
2. **Educational opportunities:** Currently, there are some excellent educational opportunities in our diocese, such as the Truth and Reconciliation Speaker Series offered by the Springbank Catholic Family of Parishes in London and available virtually to all in our diocese. We will continue these conversations with local Indigenous communities to learn from them the educational process that is needed and are adding resources to a dedicated page on our website.
3. **Service of Reparation:** With guidance from local Indigenous communities, we will craft a "service of reparation" to express the suffering and the harm afflicted by the residential schools, to atone for the role our Church played in them and to seek God's guidance as we journey on the path of healing and reconciliation.
4. **Collection of funds:** Our diocese will develop a fundraising plan as our contribution to the nation-wide collective financial commitment to support healing and reconciliation initiatives for residential school survivors, their families, and their communities announced by the Bishops of Canada on 27 September 2021. The allocation of funds raised in our diocese will involve the input of local Indigenous communities and will be part of our efforts to build good relationships and partnerships with them. We will also continue our financial commitment to the Diocese of Whitehorse, with its large Indigenous population.
5. **A new committee to oversee this work:** We will establish a committee to oversee these actions: the conversations, the educational pieces, the service of reparation, and the collection and distribution of funds. This committee would be named by the Bishop and report to the Bishop regularly. The work of healing and reconciliation is ongoing. The duration of this committee and the role it would play into the future, however, will need to be determined.

In union with the Bishops of Canada, I commit the Diocese of London to accompany you, the Indigenous Peoples of this land, on the journey of healing and reconciliation. I realize that there is much more work to do in our diocese, but I know that "we look forward to listening and learning from you as we walk in solidarity". Through the intercession of our Lady of Guadalupe, may God bless you and may our efforts bear fruit in abundance.

Most Rev. Ronald P. Fabbro, CSB  
Bishop of London  
27 September 2021