



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

February 9, 2022

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

We have all been impacted in some way as our nation undergoes an examination of our past relationships with its Indigenous Peoples. We cannot erase history, but we can look forward to – and help create – a better future.

As part of the journey towards healing and reconciliation, the Archdiocese of Edmonton has made a firm commitment to provide funds in support of programs and initiatives that respond to the various needs that exist among Indigenous Peoples in our local area.

This is part of a national effort announced by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Bishops of Canada have made a \$30-million collective financial commitment to support healing and reconciliation initiatives among Indigenous Peoples. The Archdiocese and its parishes will contribute three million dollars toward the national goal, using funds that we have been able to designate and set aside for this purpose.

In addition, since many people have expressed their desire to make a personal contribution toward this effort, there will be two special parish collections on the weekends of March 5-6 and March 12-13, 2022. Those who wish to do so can donate through the parish in this way, or make a gift online through the [Archdiocesan website](#).

I ask you to pray for the success of our Archdiocesan efforts towards healing and reconciliation. Your participation represents a tangible expression of the commitment of this local Church, together with dioceses across Canada, to unite and walk together with the Indigenous Peoples on the long road towards healing and reconciliation.

We live in a time of deep division and wide polarization. Everyone is searching for a way back to one another. By walking together with Indigenous Peoples along the path of genuine healing and renewed relationships, we can demonstrate clearly that reconciliation of the heart and right relationships is not only possible but also can become a reality in our very day.

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The funds raised in the Archdiocese of Edmonton will remain with the diocese to support programs and initiatives focused on four pillars: healing and reconciliation for communities and families; culture and language revitalization; education and community building; and dialogues for promoting indigenous spirituality and culture.

The next step in this process is to establish a local steering committee – chaired by local Indigenous leaders - which will discern potential projects, review them, and request funds for those projects. The criteria for supporting those programs, initiatives and efforts will be Indigenous-determined and Indigenous-led. Funding will aim to support Indigenous Peoples in all stages of life from children and families, kindergarten to post-secondary students, men and women in their careers, and Elders.

This funding process will be open and transparent. The Catholic community will receive regular reports, as efforts are evaluated on an ongoing basis to ensure the best possible outcome. The Archdiocese of Edmonton will coordinate its efforts and initiatives with national principles, strategy, and timelines established to assure consistency and accountability across the country.

Much work lies before us as we enter a new era of reconciliation. Let us consider this financial commitment as one of many steps on our path into new relationships of truth, reconciliation, love and respect.

There were 26 residential schools in Alberta. Two of them – Ermineskin and Youville – were within the current boundaries of the Archdiocese of Edmonton. The schools in the region were run by religious orders, primarily the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, the Sisters of Providence and the Sisters of the Assumption.

For detailed background information regarding the announcement from the CCCB, please see the following [link](#).

Yours sincerely in Christ,



✠Richard W. Smith  
Archbishop of Edmonton