



2 July 2021

**A Message from Bishop Fabbro about
Residential Schools and Relations with Canada's Indigenous People**

All Canadians are deeply concerned and angry about the discovery of children's remains at burial sites of former residential schools in British Columbia and Saskatchewan. Parishioners have written me about the Church's involvement in the residential schools and the demand for a papal apology. At the end of May, when the horrifying discovery was made of the remains of children at the Kamloops residential school, I issued a statement promising our prayers for the families and survivors and expressing our commitment to play "a constructive role in the journey towards healing and reconciliation". I would like to draw your attention to a couple of recent statements that have been published by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The statement on June 10 explains the work the bishops have been doing for several years now with Indigenous Peoples from across Canada. I encourage you to read the statement at this [link](#). It has been important for the bishops to sit down with Indigenous communities, in "listening circles", to hear their stories and to listen to what they need from the Catholic Church for reconciliation. It also is important that Indigenous voices lead the process.

A key initiative arising from these conversations is the pastoral visit of Indigenous Peoples with Pope Francis that will [take place](#) December 17-20 in Rome. The group, which will include residential school survivors, Elders and youth, will be able to dialogue directly with the pope, and he will be able to express to them "his heartfelt closeness, address the impact of colonization and the implications of the Church in the residential schools, so as to respond to the suffering of Indigenous Peoples and the ongoing effects of intergenerational trauma".

For the bishops, the conversations we have had with Indigenous Peoples, the work we are doing together and the delegation that will visit with the pope are steps on the journey of reconciliation and healing. The hope is that these common efforts will build bridges and new relationships between Indigenous Peoples and the Catholic Church in Canada, and lead to further action.

All of these statements, including my own, and resources about this important issue are available on the Diocese of London website at this [link](#).

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