



Memo 71

September 27, 2021

To: Priests, Deacons and Mandated Persons.

Object: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

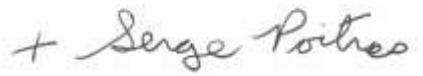
The Aboriginal community in Canada (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) has been in the spotlight almost daily for several months now, because of the suffering and trauma that is now well known, linked to the mandatory residential school system that operated for over a century and that is particularly problematic because of its negative effects on those who lived there, their families and their descendants. The Religious Communities and Dioceses involved in their operation have apologized, and the Catholic Bishops of Canada, at the conclusion of their Plenary Assembly last week, apologized and stated, "*We express our deep remorse and offer an unequivocal apology.*"

In the wake of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, the Federal Government declared September 30 as *National Day of Truth and Reconciliation*. This is a day- for government bodies. However, even as we work, it is important to mark this day in a special way.

- 1- We can meditate on the teaching of St. Paul: "*If one member suffers, all the members share in his suffering*" (I Cor 12:26). As faithful Catholics, we must hear the suffering of others, bear it with them and help to alleviate it. We can pray. First of all, St. Joseph, the principal patron saint of Canada. Then the Canadian martyrs, secondary patrons of our country: I am convinced that their intercession can be fruitful for reconciliation, as that of St. Stephen was for St. Paul. We can of course pray to Saint Kateri Tekakwitha, herself an Aboriginal person.
- 2- On September 30, we can take a moment to do a more in-depth reading on Aboriginal people, the richness of their culture, the suffering they experience, and the means to walk together towards a better future. I gave some resources to this effect in my note of July 27 and in the CCCB Q&A sent on Saturday, September 25.

- 3- We can also contribute monetarily to healing and reconciliation projects. The equivalent of one day or one hour of work could be significant; we can send our donations to the Diocesan Financial Administrator who will forward them to the CCCB.

May the Holy Spirit inspire us to feelings and actions of peace and reconciliation.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "+ Serge Poitras".

✠ Serge Poitras
Évêque de Timmins