



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

June 4, 2021

Dear Faithful People in Christ,

In recent days, the people of Canada have been shaken by the news that what is believed to be the remains of 215 children were found on the grounds of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. No one, of course, is more deeply impacted by this than the families of the children and members of their Indigenous communities.

On behalf of us all in the Archdiocese of Edmonton, I express our deep regret and profound condolences to their families and communities. Since children are especially precious in Indigenous cultures, the news out of Kamloops has given rise in them to a grief and shock that few of us can imagine.

We must acknowledge the role played by Catholic organizations in the residential school system. I recall my own testimony to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, given on behalf of the Catholic Bishops of Alberta and the Northwest Territories:

“We apologize to those who experienced sexual and physical abuse in residential schools under Catholic administration. We also express our apology and regret for Catholic participation in government policies that resulted in children being separated from their families, and often suppressed Aboriginal culture and language at the residential schools.”

I re-iterate those sentiments today, aware that they must be accompanied by actions that will foster healing and reconciliation. To this end, and on behalf of the Archdiocese, I commit to:

- full transparency with respect to any relevant archives and records, and sharing them with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.
- offering any support that we can to Indigenous peoples, and
- continue walking together with them along the long road towards reconciliation.

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We shall continue to seek ways for Catholics, together with other concerned citizens, to support the Aboriginal Peoples resident within the Archdiocese in the ongoing struggle to achieve justice and equity.

This moment in which we find ourselves weighs heavily on our hearts. Let us ask our Lord to transform this into an opportunity to stand together with the Indigenous peoples in both sympathy and solidarity. May the light of the Holy Spirit guide us together along the path of genuine reconciliation and lasting peace.

St. Kateri Tekakwitha, pray for us.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Richard W. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

✠Richard W. Smith
Archbishop of Edmonton