



February 2, 2022

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

On December 12, the National Day of Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples and the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Diocese of Saint John launched a financial appeal to contribute towards the CCCB's five-year \$30-million National Campaign to support Indigenous healing and reconciliation initiatives.

At that time, we announced a special collection to be taken up on an annual basis for this Indigenous Reconciliation Fund the last Sunday of January. As the diocese was experiencing a move into level 3 of New Brunswick's COVID-19 winter action plan (which included the closure of churches for the last two weeks of January) and was awaiting final details from the CCCB regarding the management of this Fund at a national level, this collection was postponed to the end of February **for this year only**.

Having returned to level 2 of New Brunswick's COVID-19 winter action plan, we will now schedule the planned special collection for the weekend of February 26-27. I am also pleased to provide additional information from the CCCB regarding the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund to support projects across Canada. An announcement from the CCCB was issued on Friday, January 28, 2022 (see <https://www.cccb.ca/media-release/canadas-bishops-announce-indigenous-reconciliation-fund-to-support-projects-across-canada/>.)

You will note in the CCCB media release that the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund will be governed by a Board consisting of both Indigenous directors and lay leaders. Financial measures will be in place to ensure public transparency, including the publishing of annual reports being subject to an independent accounting firm each year.

Funds from this national campaign will support regional and local projects and initiatives according to the following priorities:

- Healing and reconciliation for communities and families;
- Culture and language revitalization;
- Education and community building; and
- Dialogues for promoting Indigenous Spirituality and culture.

Further details on the grant application process will be communicated to you as they become available.

To assist parishes in responding to questions regarding the national fundraising campaign, as well as the role of the former Catholic Entities Party to the Indian Residential School Settlement, I invite you to consult the attached Questions and Answers document prepared by the CCCB. Additional information on the previous campaign by the CCEPIRSS can be found at the following link: <https://www.cccb.ca/indigenous-peoples/indian-residential-schools-and-trc/canadas-bishops-provide-update-on-indian-residential-school-settlement-agreement/>.

I am confident that given this additional information, parishes will find themselves in a good position to ensure a successful start to this important campaign, which responds to the strong desire of our diocesan faithful to contribute financially towards journeying with our Indigenous brothers and sisters in the ongoing work of healing and reconciliation in every region of the country.

Special Collection Envelopes have been sent to parishes to be used at Masses for the weekend of February 26-27. You may also contribute to this fundraising appeal at anytime on our website via cheque or email money transfer (<https://dioceseofsaintjohn.org/donations>).

Entrusting ourselves to the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, we ask God, our Creator, to bless all efforts towards healing, forgiveness, reconciliation, and a renewed fellowship.

United in prayer and solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christian Riesbeck".

✠ Christian Riesbeck, CC  
Bishop of Saint John

Encl. (2)