



4 June 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Archdiocese,

Over the past week, I have been following the news of the discovery of graves on the site of the Kamloops Indian Residential School, and pondering what I might possibly say that would help us all in this situation. I want to speak especially to you, the people of our diocese.

The news of the discovery of these unmarked graves has taken many Canadians by surprise. For those of you who attended residential schools, this news may bring up memories that you have been trying to heal, and the wounds are opened once more. For those who had no experience of the schools and their effects, such a discovery may raise many painful questions about the schools and how they were operated. As Canadians, we have to look honestly at how our government has related to Indigenous Canadians for generations. For those who cherish our Church and our faith, this raises questions about our role in operating these schools.

At this point in time, we still have no clear picture about these children and the circumstances of their death. Along with all Canadians, I am anxious to read a full report from those who are conducting the investigation.

I feel deeply the same grief and sorrow as many Canadians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous. I continue to journey forward in building respectful and positive relationships with the Indigenous communities and individuals in our diocese. I acknowledge and affirm the many gatherings and ceremonies that are taking place around our archdiocese to honour and pray for these lost children. I encourage not only prayer, but also our resolve to stand together in solidarity and compassion, Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians alike. Please know that I hold all of you in my prayers and thoughts during these days of grief.

Most Rev. Gerard Pettipas, C.Ss.R.
Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan