



27 October 2021

Dear Chief and Council of First Nations  
and Chair and Councillors of Métis Settlements,

You may already have heard that Pope Francis has responded to the request that he come to Canada and offer an apology for the Catholic Church's involvement in the running of Indian Residential Schools. This is good news, that I want to make sure you've heard.

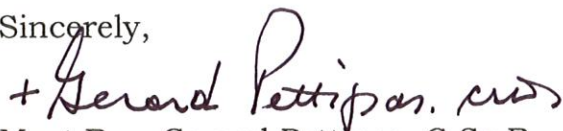
The past and current presidents of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Archbishop Richard Gagnon and Bishop Raymond Poisson, were in Rome recently, and met with the Holy Father who was evidently very pleased to accept the invitation to come to Canada. The dates and other details of his visit have yet to be worked out with the Vatican Secretary of State.

Pope Francis is also looking forward to the visit to the Vatican of an Indigenous delegation of First Nations, Inuit and Metis people from December 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021. A Métis elder from our archdiocese, Angie Crerar, is among the delegates.

The following sheet provides some further context to the Holy Father's visit to our country. I join with all Canadians in prayer, that this visit and statement be a further encouragement to relationship-building and healing in our nation.

Please feel free to contact me if you wish to discuss any aspects of the papal visit.

Sincerely,



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

## **The Visit to Canada of Pope Francis**

The Bishops of Canada are grateful that Pope Francis has accepted their invitation to visit Canada on a historic pilgrimage of healing and reconciliation.

We expect this visit to build on three years of constructive dialogue between the Canadian Bishops, the Holy See, and Indigenous Peoples who have generously shared their experiences and stories about the suffering and challenges that continue to this day.

After collectively and unequivocally apologizing for the Catholic Church's role in the residential school system this past September, discussions between the Canadian Bishops and the Holy See have continued.

The President and past-President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops recently met in Rome with the Secretary of State of the Holy See to discuss the next steps on the reconciliation journey.

The Pope was moved by the profound desire of the Bishops of Canada and the Indigenous Peoples for him to come to Canada on a pilgrimage of healing and reconciliation.

Following this meeting, the Pope has accepted the invitation from the Canadian Bishops to visit Canada.

Details will be announced by the CCCB as they are confirmed

More immediately, the Indigenous delegation to the Vatican in December will allow the Pope to hear directly from Indigenous people on the historic and ongoing legacy of residential schools, and discuss with them their hopes for the visit in service of ongoing reconciliation

*October 2021*