



4 February 2022

**Re: Indigenous Reconciliation Fund**

Dear Fathers and Parishioners,

There has been further communication from the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) to the Canadian public about the \$30 million Indigenous Reconciliation Fund. While there are some details still being worked out, especially as pertains to our diocese, I want to apprise you of the facts as we now have them.

1. The Canadian Catholic Bishops, at our plenary assembly at the end of September 2021, committed to raising \$30M over a 5-year period. A determined amount is to be raised locally, and also to be used locally for programs that promote reconciliation. Every diocese and eparchy in Canada is taking part in this, to the extent of their ability, but the total will not be less than \$30M.
2. The CCCB has structured the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund to be highly accountable and transparent. While all monies will be raised in the diocese and eparchies, that cash must be deposited in a central bank account before it is returned to the dioceses and eparchy for its stated purposes.
3. The governing board of the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund is made up of respected Indigenous leaders:  
Chief Wilton Littlechild, who was one of the TRC Commissioners,  
Giselle Marion, an Indigenous lawyer from the NWT,  
Rosella Kinoshameg, an Indigenous nurse who has been engaged for many years in health care.  
Other members include Natale Gallo from the Knights of Columbus,  
Claude Bedard from the St. Vincent de Paul Society, and Barbara Dowding from the Catholic Women's League.

4. The portion of this fund that has been allocated to the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan is \$165,000, spread over 5 years.
5. You will recall that several years ago, we instituted in our archdiocese a special collection of Ash Wednesday in our churches, the income from this collection to be used for the rehabilitation of churches and rectories in our Northern Missions. In the next five years, this collection will go towards our portion of the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund. This Ash Wednesday collection has customarily brought in about \$25,000 each year. We will top this up from other sources. We will also have to maintain our northern missions' churches and rectories from other sources as well.
6. The projects eligible for funding are to match the following priorities:
  - Healing and Reconciliation for communities and families;
  - Culture and language revitalization;
  - Education and community building;
  - Dialogues for promoting Indigenous spirituality and culture.
7. I am in the midst of establishing a group called Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle in our archdiocese. This group will be made up of Indigenous Catholics and other non-Indigenous collaborators. My plan is that this Circle will help me in putting together the process for identifying projects in our diocese that will qualify for funding in this endeavor.

Sincerely yours in Christ the Redeemer,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "+ Gerard Pettipas, C.Ss.R." with a cross at the beginning.

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