



March 1, 2022

Dear brothers and sisters of the archdiocese,

Since last summer, I and Grouard pastor Fr. Bernard Akum have been working closely with the Kapawe'no First Nation of Grouard, especially Chief Sydney Halcrow and his councillors. Our relationship has focused strongly on an open and frank discussion about the history of Indian Residential Schools and how, through truth and reconciliation, we can seek a better tomorrow.

We have been anxious to see the results of the ground penetrating radar surveying done in the Grouard area this past fall. We encourage the people of our archdiocese to read the Institute of Prairie and Indigenous Archaeology report at <https://www.kapaweno.com/single-post/irs-phase1> and to watch the short documentary and press conference on the Kapawe'no First Nation's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/kapawenofirstnation>

At a time when tensions can be high and passions inflamed, we thank the Kapawe'no First Nation for the clear, objective and educational resources they have provided as these findings were made public this afternoon, March 1st. We know bringing up past traumas and difficult moments in our nation's history is no easy task. We look forward to further information and dialogue with the Kapawe'no First Nation and their people as this important work continues.

I would like to reiterate our commitment to cooperate and be there in any way we can for the Kapawe'no First Nation throughout this process. In a July 26th meeting with Chief Halcrow and the Band Council last year, we promised to provide access to any documents and resources our archdiocese has on file, as well as the assurance of our prayers and support for the community.

We are steadfast in our commitment to healing and reconciliation with the Indigenous peoples of our archdiocese. We know we cannot change the past.

But, through the forming of open and honest relationships, we can always build a better future together. May Jesus, who gave his life for the reconciliation of the world, be with all people who seek healing and harmony in our world today.

Sincerely yours in Christ the Redeemer,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "+ Gerard Pettipas, C.Ss.R.". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

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