



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

May 8, 2022

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Last month, Pope Francis welcomed delegations representing various Indigenous communities to Rome. In his remarks on the final day of their visit, the Holy Father expressed his indignation, shame, and sorrow at the role Catholics played in the abuses of the residential school system.

Pope Francis' remarks acknowledged the pain and sorrow he heard in the stories of those who attended residential schools and spoke of the path forward between the Church and Indigenous peoples. The Holy Father said, *"I wish to tell you that the Church stands beside you and wants to continue journeying with you. Dialogue is the key to knowledge and sharing, and the Bishops of Canada have clearly stated their commitment to continue advancing together with you on a renewed, constructive, fruitful path, where encounters and shared projects will be of great help."*

In living out this commitment to accompany our Indigenous sisters and brothers who are suffering, the Diocese of Hamilton has established the ***Indigenous Reconciliation Fund***. This fund, which is part of a Canada-wide \$30 million commitment, will support Indigenous-led initiatives of healing and reconciliation. Both the Diocesan and the national fund will be overseen by a board comprised of Indigenous members.

The Diocese of Hamilton is committing \$4 million to this fund, which will support projects both local and national in scope. This commitment from the Diocese is firm, such that any donations you make will support these projects over-and-above our \$4 million commitment. I ask humbly for your generosity in support of this initiative. May God, the Creator of all, bless this journey we will take together toward a relationship of trust, healing, and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

Sincerely in Christ and Mary Immaculate,

+ Douglas Crosby, OMI
(Most Rev.) Douglas Crosby, OMI
Bishop of Hamilton

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Indigenous Reconciliation Fund: frequently asked questions

What is the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund?

The Indigenous Reconciliation Fund has been established by the dioceses of Canada to provide funds for Indigenous healing and reconciliation initiatives. Each Diocese in Canada will commit funds to the IRF, who will in turn fund local projects as identified by Diocesan or regional committees comprised of Indigenous and Catholic representatives. The total commitment across Canada will be at least \$30 million.

What is the Diocese of Hamilton's share of this commitment?

The Diocese of Hamilton is committing \$4 million to the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund. All funds raised from parishioners will be over and above this \$4 million, making this a minimum commitment. Of these funds, \$2.1 million will be allocated locally through partnerships within the Diocese of Hamilton, while \$1.9 million will support initiatives in other dioceses or communities in need across the country.

What projects will be funded through the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund?

The specific projects, programs, and initiatives supported by the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund will be determined based on the recommendations and deliberations of the Indigenous members of our local fund committee. However, we do know the funds will be allocated broadly to programs that work toward accomplishing Call to Action #61 of Canada's *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*: healing and reconciliation projects; culture and language revitalization projects; education and relationship-building projects; and dialogues for Indigenous spiritual leaders and youth.

Who will be managing the fund?

The Indigenous Reconciliation Fund will be managed with financial measures in place to ensure transparency and good governance. Board directors and members of the corporation collectively bring a strong financial acumen and deep commitment to the healing and reconciliation journey. The directors of the Board include:

Chief Wilton Littlechild, Ph.D, a Cree chief, residential school survivor, and lawyer who served as a Commissioner for the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* of Canada.

Giselle Marion, who holds a law degree from the University of British Columbia and was called to the Bar in the Northwest Territories in 2008.

Rosella Kinoshameg, an Odawa/Ojibway woman from the Wikwemikong Unceded First Nation Territory.

The members of the corporation include:

Natale Gallo, a former Supreme Director of the Knights of Columbus, where he represented Canada on the International Board of Directors. Nat is also a parishioner in the Diocese of Hamilton.

Claude Bédard, National President of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in Canada.

Barbara Dowding, former National President of the Catholic Women's League of Canada.

Who will sit on the local Indigenous Reconciliation Fund committee?

While the local membership of the committee is not yet finalized, at least half of the committee's members will be from local Indigenous communities.

Are donations tax-deductible?

All donations are eligible for charitable receipts which will be given through your parish. Accordingly, cheques can be made out to your parish, listing *Indigenous Reconciliation Fund* in the memo field.

For more information, please contact the Stewardship and Development Office at 905.528.7988 or give@hamiltondiocese.com