



The Ongoing Journey to Healing and Reconciliation – July 19, 2021

As Canadians reflect on how we can respond to the pain and suffering experienced by survivors of residential schools and their loved ones, the Archdiocese of Toronto is committed to being directly engaged in the ongoing journey of truth and reconciliation.

While the archdiocese did not operate residential schools, we have a responsibility to take genuine and meaningful steps to journey with Indigenous communities on the path to reconciliation, and to assist in healing the trauma experienced from the residential school system.

We are currently establishing working groups, each enriched by Indigenous voices, to help guide and support our efforts. To that end, the archdiocese has identified the following priorities:

- **Education** – initiatives to educate our clergy, staff and the faithful regarding the tragic legacy of residential schools and its continuing impact on Indigenous people, and to develop a greater understanding and appreciation of Indigenous spirituality.
- **Outreach and Spiritual support** – initiatives to support survivors of residential schools and those suffering intergenerational trauma. These may include healing circles, personal or group counselling, workshops, speakers, listening sessions, opportunities for prayer, reconciliation services, and other spiritual supports.
- **Financial support** – the Archdiocese of Toronto is developing a financial campaign to support ongoing healing and reconciliation efforts. A diverse working group will assist in formulating the campaign framework and related details in the weeks ahead. In response to those who have expressed a desire to contribute immediately, the Healing & Reconciliation fund has been established. Donations can be made [online](https://bit.ly/healingreconciliation) (<https://bit.ly/healingreconciliation>), by phone (416) 934-3411 or through any Catholic church in the Archdiocese of Toronto.

We recognize the journey to reconciliation is one that will continue for years to come. As we reflect on the role of the Catholic Church in operating residential schools, we echo the words of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in 1991:

“We apologize for the existence of the schools themselves, recognizing that the biggest abuse was not what happened in the schools, but that the schools themselves happened... We wish to apologize in a very particular way for the instances of physical and sexual abuse that occurred in those schools... Far from attempting to defend or rationalize these cases of abuse in any way, we wish to state publicly that we acknowledge they were inexcusable, intolerable and a betrayal of trust in one of its most serious forms. We deeply and very specifically, apologize to every victim of such abuse and we seek help in searching for means to bring about healing.”

We will continue to keep you updated as these initiatives develop. Additional information and resources can be found by visiting: www.archtoronto.org/residentialschools.