



WILLIAM T. MCGRATTAN

BISHOP of CALGARY

June 4, 2021

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The reported discovery of the remains of 215 children at the former *Kamloops Indian residential school* has shocked the consciousness of our country, its people, the Church, and the world to the painful and dark reality of our Canadian Indian residential school system. This has also surfaced once again the suffering and trauma which continues to mark the lives of our indigenous brothers and sisters and their communities.

On behalf of the people of the Diocese of Calgary, I personally share in this devastating sorrow and express my deepest regret at the loss of the lives of these children and the enduring pain which residential schools have caused within our indigenous communities. In solidarity, we must act in the pursuit of justice, reconciliation, and true healing.

As the Bishop of Calgary, through this statement, I personally recommit the Diocese in expressing the apology and regret made by the Bishops of Alberta and the Northwest Territories in 2014 to our indigenous brothers and sisters.

We, the Catholic Bishops of Alberta and Northwest Territories, apologize to those who experienced sexual and physical abuse in Residential Schools under Catholic administration.

We also express our apology and regret for Catholic participation in government policies that resulted in children being separated from their families, and often suppressed Aboriginal culture and language at the Residential Schools.

We commit ourselves to work in the Catholic community and the wider society to challenge attitudes of racism and prejudice that continue to exist in Alberta and Canada today. Aboriginal communities still face many serious issues that go beyond what will be addressed at the TRC, including land, treaty rights, education, health care, housing, jobs, and environmental threats.

We will continue to find ways for Catholics, together with other concerned Canadians, to support more effectively Aboriginal peoples in their ongoing struggles to achieve justice and equity in Canadian society.

The picture and images of children's shoes placed at the front steps with lit candles remind us of the voices of these children and the need for restorative justice. In prayer, we unite ourselves with our

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suffering brothers and sisters so that the Spirit will show us the path of solidarity in promoting true justice and healing.

For those families deeply impacted, we ask for the intercession of St. Kateri Tekakwitha for them to receive consolation, healing, and strength.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William T. McGrattan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

†William T. McGrattan
Bishop of Calgary