



19 September 2023

My dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord Jesus,

You may recall that one of the national pastoral priorities of the Church in Canada is healing and reconciliation with and for Indigenous Peoples and communities. In this vein, Pope Francis' visit to Canada in the summer of 2022 adopted the theme of, "*Walking Together*". While his visit has come and gone, the call for us to journey together on this path remains. During his penitential pilgrimage to our country, the Holy Father said, "It is my hope that concrete ways can be found to make those peoples better known and esteemed, so that all may learn to walk together."

We must continue to pray for ongoing healing and reconciliation in addition to listening and being present to those who have experienced physical, emotional and spiritual pain. As we approach Saturday, September 30, 2023, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, I would ask that you keep this intention close in prayer as we continue to walk together with Indigenous Peoples of This Land.

The Indigenous Reconciliation Fund, set up to facilitate this task, seeks to support projects that are determined locally in collaboration with First Nations, Métis and Inuit partners. The fund has been designed to meet the highest standards of transparency and good governance and is overseen by a national Board of Directors led by Indigenous leaders. As of today, this national initiative has raised over \$11 million, putting it on track to reach its five-year, \$30 million commitment.

Our next archdiocesan collection to contribute toward the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund will take place on the weekend of **September 30/October 1, 2023**. I encourage you to accept the invitation of the Holy Father and become engaged in the ongoing journey of healing and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples of This Land by contributing to this special collection.

Let us continue this important journey of reconciliation, healing and hope, asking our Blessed Mother to intercede for us with her son, Jesus as we move forward in proclaiming Christ and his Kingdom which includes reaching out, caring and imitating and following His command, "that they may see your good deeds, and glorify your Father in Heaven." (Mt 5:16)

St. Kateri Tekakwitha, Protectress of Canada, pray for us!

Yours Sincerely in Jesus with Mary,

Most Rev. Francis Leo
Archbishop of Toronto