

Community Life

Date: July 27, 2022



Communiqué #10

Catholic and Living It!

TO: Provincial Chairpersons of Community Life
CC: National Executive (for information)
National Life Member Liaison
FROM: Faith Anderson, National Chairperson of Community Life
ENCL: *Living with Christ* Papal Visit Prayer Book

“The power of true reconciliation originates in the true recognition of human dignity; God Himself loves our humanity so much that He has given us His own Son.”
(† Gérald Cyprien Cardinal Lacroix, Archbishop of Québec, Primate of Canada)

As I write this communiqué, Pope Francis has begun his journey of reconciliation with Indigenous people in Canada. Ongoing prayers are needed for the success of this historical trip to Canada by Pope Francis but also for the healing to take place between the church and Indigenous peoples in Canada. Information on Pope Francis’ visit (July 24-29) can be found at papalvisit.ca/watch/. In addition, to accompany the visit, a special edition of Novalis’ *Living with Christ* is enclosed.

This historic visit is monumental in the reconciliation process of the Catholic church and Indigenous peoples in Canada and includes an apology from Pope Francis. There are significant costs associated with bringing together the Holy Father and Indigenous peoples, and members are challenged to commit \$1.00 each to support the visit. Councils can direct donations to their respective diocese, or members can donate directly at papalvisit.ca. Be sure to include the information in the 2022 annual report survey. The annual report survey is an opportunity to showcase the valuable contributions of councils and members.

Indigenous Reconciliation Fund

In a July 18th release from the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB), the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund’s board of directors announced that the fund is officially accepting proposals and distributing funds for projects supporting healing and reconciliation. The fund “has already collected \$4.6 million from Catholic dioceses” as part of its \$30 million five-year commitment.

Directors previously announced are:

- **Chief Wilton Littlechild** (chairperson) is a Cree chief, residential school survivor and lawyer who served as a commissioner for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.
- **Giselle Marion** holds a law degree from the University of British Columbia and works as a director of client services with the Tłı̨chǫ Government in the Northwest Territories.
- **Rosella Kinoshameg** is an Odawa/Ojibway woman and residential school survivor from Wikwemikong Unceded First Nation Territory. She has more than 50 years of nursing experience, primarily working with First Nations communities on community health care and an honorary doctorate in sacred letters from Regis College at the University of Toronto.

The CCCB noted that **Hon. Graydon Nicholas**, CM, ONB, LL.D is the most recent addition to the board; he has a lengthy history of working for justice for First Nations and other people. A former lieutenant governor of New Brunswick, lawyer, judge and Indigenous leader, Mr. Nicholas brings a wealth of expertise and perspective to the important work of the fund.

Chairperson Chief Littlechild said, “The Indigenous Reconciliation Fund is a critically important effort in support of the path of healing and reconciliation between the Catholic Church and Indigenous Peoples.”

The July 24-31 issue of *The Catholic Register* notes the first project funded by the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund will be Cote Culture Camp, a language and land-based camp in Kamsack, Saskatchewan. Archdiocese of Regina spokesperson Eric Gurash is quoted stating the camp puts “children and youth in practical touch with the language, ceremonies, history and heritage through land-based instruction and continuing language classes.” In the same article, “Reconciliation fund approves first project,” Hon. Graydon Nicholas states, “One of the unfortunate things that happened immediately at residential schools was loss of language... We’ve lost culture. The loss of identity, and also the loss of Indigenous spirituality... .”

How can councils/members participate? There is still a long road to raising the \$30 million committed by the church. Councils and members are challenged to donate \$2.00 each for the next five years to support the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund. Through this donation, the membership would make a powerful statement, over five years, towards tangibly supporting Indigenous peoples and the church as together the road to reconciliation is walked. Please ask your diocesan counterparts to encourage members to check with their local diocese to donate and to remind councils to include the information in the 2022 annual report survey.

Provincial chairpersons are asked to ensure this communiqué is directed to the next level and to guarantee the grassroots members at the parish level receive the information. Together we can walk with Jesus as we celebrate being *Catholic and Living It!*



Faith Anderson
National Chairperson of Community Life