



8 February 2023

Dear Parishioners, Priests and Deacons, and all Persons of good will,

I am forwarding to you the letter that is being published and distributed today by the Catholic Bishops of Canada, to the People of God – faithful Catholics who share our common home Canada with all the Indigenous Peoples of this land. As you can see, this letter expresses the desire of all the Canadian Catholic bishops to continue the spirit of Pope Francis’ visit to Canada last July. The theme of the Holy Father’s pilgrimage of penance was “Walking Together”.

The Indigenous delegation that met Pope Francis in the Vatican last April/May, as well as the Pope’s visit to Canada, were expressions of a desire for reconciliation and healing. We all admit that these two events, as powerful as they were, are only the beginning of a hoped-for new relationship between the Catholic Church and Indigenous Peoples. This calls for continuing efforts at relationship building.

It is my desire that we strengthen these relationships locally in our archdiocese. I have longed for this since becoming your bishop in late 2006. My years of work on the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement awakened me to both the beauty of Indigenous culture, traditions and spirituality, as well as the deep suffering of these Peoples. Forging new and respectful relationships is a challenging task, if only because there are 18 First Nations in this archdiocese, as well as 4 Metis Settlements. I cannot do this all on my own. I call on your fervent prayers and moral support, and close collaboration whenever possible.

St. Kateri Tekakwitha, pray for us.

Most Rev. Gerard Pettipas, C.Ss.R.
Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan