



ARCHIDIOCESE DE SAINT-BONIFACE ARCHDIOCESE

-> -----

2010

ARCHBISHOP'S HOUSE

BUREAU DE L'ARCHEVEQUE

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

April 29,

Dear faithful of the Archdiocese of Saint Boniface,

This spring, a significant event for the life of our Church will take place; it concerns our Church's relationship with aboriginal people, as well as the relationship between the First Nations, Metis, Inuit and the Canadian society as a whole.

It will be the first national event organized by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, related to the Indian residential schools. This event will take place in Winnipeg, June 16-19, 2010.

The Commission is a fruit of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, signed by the Government of Canada, the Assembly of the First Nations and various religious groups who administered these schools on behalf of the federal government. Among the signatories of this Agreement are 51 catholic groups, including religious communities and some dioceses, one of them being the Archdiocese of Saint Boniface.

The mandate of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is to allow the people who went to residential schools (or their descendants), as well as the administrators, teachers and employees of these schools, to "share their story", to share what they experienced in the schools. They are invited also to share the consequences and the after-effects of this reality for the Aboriginal people and their relationship with Canadians as a whole.

One goal of the Commission is not only to share with the Canadians the truth about the Indian residential schools and the challenges raised by their consequences, but to lead the way to a reconciliation between all, aboriginal and non-aboriginal people.

As many Catholic groups have been involved with the residential schools, it is important that, as Catholics and Canadian citizens, we take part in this process. For many of us, our knowledge of the schools and the reasons for their establishment is rather limited. I believe that it might be helpful to spend some time reflecting on these realities with other Catholics before June 16, so that we can be better prepared to enter into the process with a spirit of openness, a desire to work for reconciliation.

For all these reasons, I invite you, all the faithful of the archdiocese of Saint-Boniface, to participate in an information meeting, as a preparation for the national event that will take place this coming June. This information meeting will be led by Br Thomas Novak o.m.i. For many years now, Br Thomas Novak has been involved with these issues and he is certainly in a position to inform us about the reality of the residential schools, about the political choices

151, avenue de la Cath^drale, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R2H 0H6

(204) 237-9851 Te'l'ecopieur / Fax (204) 231-2652

alegatt@archsaintboniface.ca

behind these schools, about the role of the Catholic groups who were running the schools, and about the steps already taken by these Catholic groups (religious congregations and dioceses) towards healing and reconciliation.

One workshop has been organized for each of the three urban zones or pastoral regions of the Archdiocese. All are invited to attend one of these meetings. The date and location of the workshops are the following:

- > 1) Kilcona           **May 19 at 7:00 p.m. at Holy Redeemer Parish** (English)
- 2) South Urban   **May 25 at 7:00 p.m. at Saint Timothy Parish** (English)
- 3) French Urban **May 26 at 7:30 p.m. at Saint Eugene Parish**

I strongly encourage you to participate in one of these meetings, in order to learn more about the reality of the residential schools, so that, with open minds and hearts, we become instruments and partners in the necessary reconciliation between the Aboriginal people and Canadian society as a whole. We, as Catholics, must take part in this healing and reconciliation process.

I invite you to sincerely take these matters into consideration and I thank you in advance for your active participation in one of the coming meetings. I also encourage you to take part in the June 16-19 national event, depending on your availability.

And to conclude, I invite you all to pray the Holy Spirit, asking the Spirit to bring the gift of peace, reconciliation, justice and solidarity to all Catholics and citizens of our nation.

Sincerely,

+Albert LeGatt Archbishop of  
Saint Boniface