



CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF SASKATCHEWAN

May 13, 2022

“Visit to Canada by Pope Francis - July 2022”

Dear Clergy, Religious and Lay Faithful of the Catholic Dioceses and Eparchy in Saskatchewan, Citizens of the Province of Saskatchewan:

We the Catholic bishops of Saskatchewan, join with you and others across our country who are welcoming the news that Pope Francis will visit this land on a pilgrimage of healing, hope and reconciliation July 24 to 29, 2022, following up on the visit by the Indigenous delegation in late March and the apology he made to Indigenous Peoples April 1 in Rome.

This announcement follows the invitation of the representatives of the recent Indigenous delegation to the Vatican, and that of the Bishops of Canada. It also follows upon the related Call to Action calling for the Pope to visit Canada “to issue an apology to Survivors, their families, and communities for the Roman Catholic Church’s role in the spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children in Catholic-run residential schools.”

The visit from Pope Francis to this land – the Treaty territories and the homeland of the Métis peoples - is an important step for many in the ongoing journey of truth and reconciliation, and we trust and pray that his pastoral presence here will bring support and healing. The visit will provide an opportunity for Pope Francis to further listen to and dialogue with Indigenous Peoples, to express his heartfelt closeness, to address the impact of residential schools in Canada, and to encourage us to continue to walk together in a good way that allow steps towards healing and closure.

Given the distances involved, the limited time available and the health of Pope Francis, the Vatican has announced that the visit will be to three communities: Edmonton, Quebec City, and Iqaluit. We acknowledge and share in the disappointment that Saskatchewan is not included in the destinations that Pope Francis will visit. Many Indigenous leaders and Survivors have worked long and hard to encourage a visit to our province, and we are grateful for your efforts, which we have sought to support. But we also understand the many invitations he received, the discussions with Indigenous

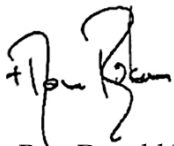
representatives during the Vatican visit which took place, and the limitations imposed by Pope Francis's health. We are determined, in the present circumstances, to work closely with Indigenous communities, with Survivors, Elders, Knowledge Keepers and leadership, to take the steps which would allow Pope Francis's visit to bring as much healing as possible to the First Nations and Métis Peoples of our province.

Discernment is now under way in terms of how to invite and support the greatest possible participation from Indigenous Peoples of our region. Our prayer is that with the proximity to Edmonton, many may be able to be present at the encounter there; and that with the help of technology, through prayer and acts of solidarity, residential school survivors, their families and communities, and all of our society will experience healing and hope through this papal visit.

Specific programming and events will be confirmed approximately six weeks prior to the Holy Father's arrival. Visit www.papalvisit.ca or www.visitepapable.ca for more information and to stay updated on the latest developments.

Please join us in praying for all those who attended residential schools and all who continue to suffer because of the legacy of the schools, as well as for all those who are working for truth, understanding, and healing. We also pray for the health of Pope Francis as he makes this pilgrimage to this land.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,



Most Rev. Donald Bolen
Archbishop of Regina



Most Rev. Lawrence Huculak, OSBM
Apostolic Administrator Eparchy of Saskatoon



Most Rev. Murray Chatlain
Archbishop of Keewatin-Le Pas



Most Rev. Mark Hagemoen
Bishop of Saskatoon



Most Rev. Stephen Hero
Bishop of Prince Albert