



**WALKING  
TOGETHER**  
POPE FRANCIS CANADA 2022

**MARCHER  
ENSEMBLE**  
PAPE FRANÇOIS CANADA 2022

**A PILGRIMAGE OF HEALING,  
RECONCILIATION AND HOPE  
JULY 24 – 29, 2022**

Presentation to Toronto Catholic District School Board Trustees  
by Neil MacCarthy, Senior Lead, Communications, Papal Visit to Canada

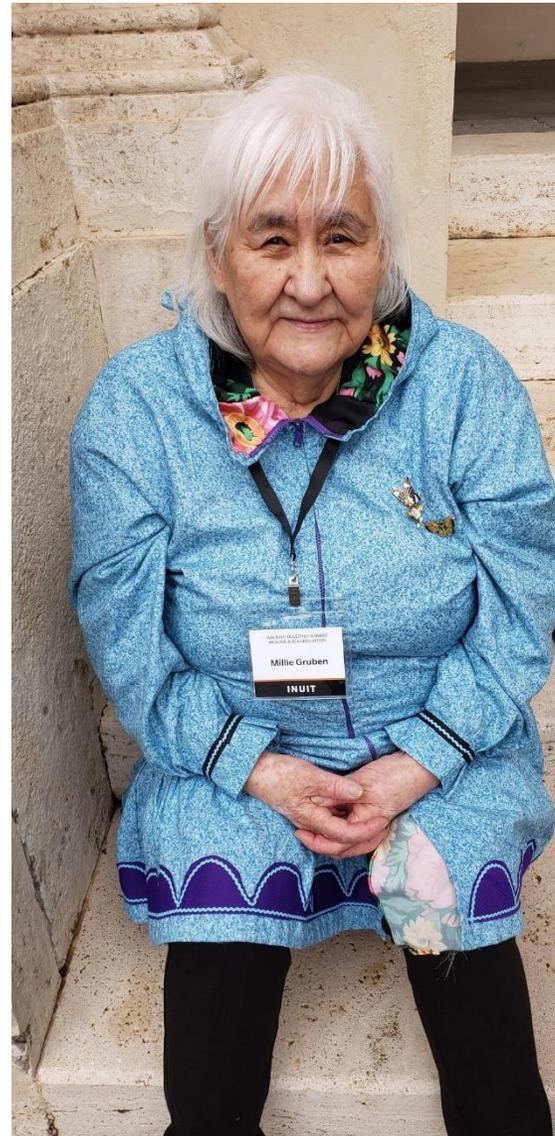


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The journey of listening and dialogue with Pope Francis began in Rome – March 2022.

Survivors – the focus of our efforts.



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# A Humble Pilgrim

Listening, Personal Witness,  
Humility, Authenticity



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“I think back on the tragic situations that so many of you, your families and your communities have known; of what you shared with me about the suffering you endured in the residential schools.

These are traumas that are in some way reawakened whenever the subject comes up; I realize too that our meeting today can bring back old memories and hurts, and that many of you may feel uncomfortable even as I speak.

Yet it is right to remember, because forgetfulness leads to indifference and, as has been said, “the opposite of love is not hatred, it’s indifference... and the opposite of life is not death, it’s indifference” (E. WIESEL). To remember the devastating experiences that took place in the residential schools hurts, angers, causes pain, and yet it is necessary.”



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“Today I am here, in this land that, along with its ancient memories, preserves the scars of still open wounds. I am here because the first step of my penitential pilgrimage among you is that of again asking forgiveness, of telling you once more that I am deeply sorry.

Sorry for the ways in which, regrettably, many Christians supported the colonizing mentality of the powers that oppressed the Indigenous peoples. I am sorry. I ask forgiveness, in particular, for the ways in which many members of the Church and of religious communities cooperated, not least through their indifference, in projects of cultural destruction and forced assimilation promoted by the governments of that time, which culminated in the system of residential schools.”





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## Moments of Authentic Encounter





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Papal Visit to Canada was an historical and critical moment in the ongoing healing journey. In conversations with Indigenous sisters and brothers, we have heard:

- Calls for greater transparency with the preservation and disclosure of residential school records;
- Asks for support to address the issue of Indigenous artifacts housed at the Vatican Museum;
- A desire to affirm the inherent rights of Indigenous people and to clarify the historical policies and principles often referred to as the “Doctrine of Discovery”;
- An invitation to walk with First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities in addressing systemic injustices which continue to today; and
- To financially support initiatives that advance healing and reconciliation.





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Significant steps have taken over the past year including:

- Dioceses/religious orders working with Indigenous partners to provide historical records (residential schools)
- Delegation to Rome to meet with Pope Francis – March/April 2022
- Papal Visit to Canada planned in record time – 4 months vs 12 – 18 months.
- Pledge of \$30 M to support healing & reconciliation (\$5 million raised to date – Archdiocese of Toronto collection held October 1/2 for those who wanted to participate.
- Education of clergy/staff/schools – history and legacy of residential schools – this journey continues.



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What can each one of us do to join in the journey of healing, reconciliation and hope?

Consider how we might “walk together” in our own communities through:

- Education
- Engagement
- Advocacy



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**Thank You!**