

Questions and Answers

Canada's Catholic Bishops are fully committed to working with Indigenous peoples and communities across the country to support healing and reconciliation, and to address the historic and ongoing suffering that Catholic entities contributed to through their roles in the Indian Residential School ("IRS") system. As part of this work, the CCCB have committed to raising \$30 million to support important projects for Indigenous partners across the land.

We know that this work comes with several questions about past fundraising efforts from Catholic entities, as well as the Church's response to the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement ("IRSSA"). While the CCCB was not party to the agreement, we have consulted with Catholic entities and Indigenous partners, and reviewed records that shed light on this chapter of Canadian history.

The following document answers frequently asked questions about our national fundraising campaign, as well as the role of Catholic entities in the IRSSA.

Fundraising

1. Are you confident the Bishops will meet their new \$30M target?

Yes. Canada's Bishops are fully committed to meeting the joint \$30 million financial commitment over five years. The CCCB has received firm commitments from 73 dioceses who will help reach this target. Under the planned framework, the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund will publish annual reports and be subject to an independent accounting firm each year, to ensure full transparency and accountability.

2. Who will be managing the fund?

The Indigenous Reconciliation Fund will be managed with financial measures in place to ensure transparency and good governance. Board directors and members of the corporation will collectively bring a strong financial acumen and deep commitment to the healing and reconciliation journey. The directors of the Board include:

- **Chief Wilton Littlechild, Ph.D.**, a Cree chief, residential school survivor, and lawyer who served as a Commissioner for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Chief Littlechild has been a Member of Parliament, Vice-President of the Indigenous Parliament of the Americas, North American Representative to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and a Chairperson for the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Commission on First Nations and Métis Peoples and Justice Reform.
- **Giselle Marion**, who holds a law degree from the University of British Columbia and was called to the Bar in the Northwest Territories in 2008. During her articles Ms. Marion worked for the Department of Justice. She is a Tłı̨ch̨o Citizen and was born and raised in Behchokò, NT. She is the Director of Client Services with the Tłı̨ch̨o Government out of the Behchokò office.

- **Rosella Kinoshameg**, an Odawa/Ojibway woman from the Wikwemikong Unceded First Nation Territory. She is a Registered Nurse with over 50 years of nursing experience, mostly working with First Nations communities doing community health, maternal child health, immunizations, home and community Care. She was one of the original members of the CCCB's Indigenous Council and continues to serve as a member of the Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle.

The members of the corporation include:

- **Natale Gallo**, a former Supreme Director of the Knights of Columbus, where he represented Canada on the International Board of Directors.
- **Claude Bédard**, National President of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in Canada.
- **Barbara Dowding**, former National President of the Catholic Women's League of Canada.

3. *Why should Indigenous peoples believe you will follow through on this commitment?*

Canada's Catholic Bishops recognize and share the immense disappointment that past fundraising efforts did not live up to the responsibility to meaningfully address the Catholic Church's role in Canada's Indian Residential School System. We recognize that there is no single step that can eliminate the pain and suffering felt by residential school survivors, but by listening, seeking relationships, and working collaboratively, we hope to learn how to walk together on the long journey to healing and reconciliation.

The new Indigenous Reconciliation Fund will be transparent and accountable in supporting the healing and reconciliation initiatives that our Indigenous partners value.

4. *Why are you only promising \$30 million over five years?*

We recognize that there is no single step that can eliminate the pain and suffering felt by residential school survivors. The Indigenous Reconciliation Fund is a tangible expression of the Bishops' commitment to walk with Indigenous peoples along the long journey towards healing and reconciliation. By creating a time-limited fund, we hope to achieve a sense of urgency from Catholic entities and their faithful communities, as well as accountability to Indigenous partners and the general public.

5. *Can you confirm what date the \$30 million will be delivered by?*

\$30 million will be delivered over the next five years, through contributions made by 73 dioceses across Canada.

6. *How much has each diocese committed to fundraise?*

Seventy-three dioceses across Canada have made concrete commitments to help fulfill the \$30 million financial commitment over five years. We recognize that exact amount fundraised by each diocese may vary from these initial commitments. With that in mind, under our proposed framework, the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund will transparently report on the fund's finances on an annual basis, and be subject to an audit by an independent accounting firm each year.

7. *Doesn't the Church have enough money to fulfill this commitment? Why are you asking Catholics to donate?*

The Catholic Church in Canada consists of thousands of independent entities, each with their own financial circumstances. It is up to individual dioceses to determine how best to meet their financial commitments. Having said that, we have heard loudly from Catholics across Canada who wish to participate in the healing and reconciliation journey.

By launching a grassroots-led campaign where local dioceses and their faithful can raise funds and provide meaningful input on disbursement plans, we believe that we can engage Catholics in a new way around this critically important priority.

CCEPIRSS

1. Why has it taken so long to release this information?

Canada's Bishops are making every effort to be open and transparent about the Church's role in the Indian Residential School System. The CCCB has worked over the past several months – speaking to clergy, lawyers, and Indigenous partners involved in the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement – to clarify a few important issues.

As the CCEPIRSS, the organization representing Catholic entities under the agreement, is no longer active, this work has taken some time. Having completed an external review, we are now releasing all the information we have available to us.

2. Are you suggesting that the recent criticisms of the Church are wrong?

Reconciliation is a long and ongoing journey that inspires the work of Canada's Bishops every day. We recognize and understand that there have been significant past failures with regard to the Catholic Church's relationship with Indigenous peoples.

While it is our understanding that the Catholic entities party to the IRSSA honoured all of their legal settlement obligations – we share the disappointment that more could have been done. Canada's Bishops are committed to meaningfully address the historic and ongoing suffering caused by the Catholic Church's role in Canada's Indian Residential School System. This includes fulfilling our joint financial commitment of \$30 million over the next five years.

3. Minister Miller has suggested that the Government should not have settled with the Church, do you agree?

An external review from McDougall Gauley LLP confirms that Catholic entities met their legal obligations under the IRSSA. Specifically, Catholic entities fully paid their cash payment contributions and exceeded their commitment to in-kind services as part of the agreement. On top of these settlement commitments, the Catholic entities agreed to a "best efforts" fundraising campaign, similar to that of a hospital or charitable foundation. While the campaign was enthusiastically championed, it did not meet the \$25 million goal put forward.

As Catholics, we are disappointed by the end result of this campaign and believe that the valuable lessons learned will help support the Canadian Bishops and all Catholics in Canada as they seek to deliver on their national fundraising pledge.

4. Why didn't CCEPIRSS just pay for the administrative costs?

While the CCCB was not party to the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement, it is our understanding that administrative costs were expressly permitted and anticipated under the agreement. Furthermore, the majority of administrative costs incurred by CCEPIRSS were paid by the Catholic entities directly with \$399,999 being recovered from the principal amount paid under the agreement.

5. If the Church did fulfill all of its IRSSA obligations, why are you still fundraising?

The Bishops of Canada are fully committed to addressing the historical and ongoing trauma caused by the residential school system. In moving forward with this new collective financial commitment, we are recognizing that there is much more we must do in the long journey towards healing and reconciliation.

6. *Are you willing to re-establish CCEPIRSS?*

CCEPIRSS was originally established at the request of the Government of Canada, in order to fulfil obligations under the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement. CCEPIRSS fulfilled and was released from those obligations by the Government. Going forward, we will continue to work collaboratively with all dioceses across the country in fulfilling the Bishops' shared commitment to healing and reconciliation.

7. *What lessons have you learned from the failed "Moving Forward" campaign?*

Canada's Bishops share the disappointment that that the "best efforts" campaign did not yield the results that were hoped for. Although achievement of the \$25 million target was not a condition of the IRSSA, the resulting \$2.6 million of disbursements was inadequate in meeting the historic and ongoing need for projects in support of IRS survivors and their families.

We have drawn lessons from this effort to ensure the recent \$30 million national pledge made by Canadian Bishops in September 2021 is achieved in full and delivered in a way that meaningfully respects the needs of Indigenous communities. In particular, the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund will:

- Have financial measures in place to ensure transparency and good governance;
- Be comprised of Indigenous and Catholic members;
- Fund projects identified by local committees comprising of Indigenous and Catholic membership;
- Ensure any administrative costs are on top of the \$30 million being raised; and
- Provide regular public updates.