

Archdiocesan Commission for Truth and Reconciliation (ACTR) 2020 Report

The year 2020 marked the five-year anniversary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's publication of its 6 volume *Final Report*, with its 94 Calls to Action. The TRC *Final Report* was an invitation to our nation and to our churches to open our eyes to the suffering experienced by Indigenous people as a result of colonization and efforts at forced assimilation, most notably in the residential school system. The TRC's *Final Report* did not give up on the churches, but rather, summoned us to conversion, owning past sins and mistakes, and learning how to walk in solidarity with Indigenous people in building a different and better future together.

Here in the Archdiocese of Regina, the ACTR has set out to strengthen relations and discern together what steps the Archdiocese can take in responding to the TRC Calls to Action. In 2020 we continued with various initiatives within our 4 circles of activity and engagement wherein we can strive to strengthen relations, and respond to the TRC Calls to Action.

Here are a few highlights that stand out this past year that focused on walking with and listening to survivors of residential schools, formation for those in leadership and education for parishes and all people:

In the beginning of March, the Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi, took time in his pastoral visit to the Archdiocese to encounter some of the Indigenous kokums (grandmothers) at Sacred Heart School, to listen to their Residential School experiences. It was a beautiful encounter of deep listening, and an acknowledgment of pain that helps facilitate healing and reconciliation. He also participated in a regional listening circle that the Archdiocese hosted. The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops has encouraged Diocesan/Regional Listening Circles with Indigenous Communities, where Bishops and church representatives listen deeply to Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers and other members of the Indigenous community. These listening circles are focused on the theme of healing, within Indigenous communities, in the Church and in society, asking how the Church and Indigenous communities might envision walking together towards the future.

Another area that encompassed formation for those in leadership was our involvement in a Working Group on Indigenous Spirituality. The CCCB is wanting to study Indigenous spirituality, in part responding to TRC Calls to Action 48 n. ii and 60, and to the United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The goal is to provide bishops and potentially Catholic parishes across the country with a better understanding of Indigenous spirituality. A resource is being prepared in consultation with Indigenous Elders and practitioners of Indigenous spirituality, with the help of Indigenous researchers and writers. One section of the resource that is being drafted in this Archdiocese concerns an overview of themes in Indigenous spirituality, drawing on Indigenous languages, spiritual connections to the land and all creation through creation stories, traditions, ceremonies, and teachings, as they are found in different parts of the country and among different Indigenous Peoples. Our working group here in the Archdiocese has really enjoyed this process of research and relationship building with one another, with the excitement in knowing that we have been involved in a process that we hope will impact the church in Canada.

Part of our effort in formation and educational opportunities, especially for parishes, is an initiative entitled "4 Seasons of Reconciliation". It is a series of multi-media teaching units that was developed and produced by *Productions Cazabon* in partnership with First Nations University of Canada, to promote a renewed relationship between Indigenous Peoples and Canadians through transformative learning. Much work and preparation has been going on throughout 2020 and it's our hope that we can embark on this journey as an Archdiocese this year of 2021.