



31 January 2023

Dear Volunteer,

The Holy Father's Apostolic Visit to Canada, which took place from 24 to 30 July 2022, was a historic moment in the life of the Church, both in Canada and universally.

Due in part to the urgency the Holy Father himself placed on his "penitential pilgrimage," and because of his heartfelt desire to advance healing and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples without delay, the complex preparations undertaken for his visit were realized within an extremely compressed timeframe.

By the grace of God, more than 4,000 volunteers, like yourself, answered the call to serve in so many different capacities; from planning, to offering shuttle services, to distributing dignity bags for Survivors, to assisting with security, clean up, and everything in between.

The Holy Father came to listen and dialogue with Indigenous Peoples. He desired to express his heartfelt closeness to them, to acknowledge the negative repercussions of colonization, and to apologize for the impact of the former Indian Residential Schools on survivors and their families. He also came to speak directly to younger generations of Indigenous Peoples, to express his admiration for Indigenous culture and spirituality, and to promote a greater spirit of unity among us.

The blessing of the Papal Visit, which has helped advance truth, healing, reconciliation, and hope between the Church, Canada, and Indigenous Peoples, owes much to your generosity, service, dedication, and care. On behalf of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, I wish to extend my heartfelt gratitude to you for your contribution to that important mission. May we all continue to walk with Indigenous Peoples, inspired by the example set out by Pope Francis.

Sincerely yours,

The Most Rev. Raymond Poisson
Bishop of Saint-Jérôme-Mont-Laurier
President of the Canadian Conference
of Catholic Bishops