Message from Bishop Chris Harper, Diocese of Saskatoon

Prayers ascending for all our Indigenous communities. This past long weekend here in Saskatchewan was indeed a problematic and painful one. With the multiple stabbings in James Smith First Nation, Shootings in Witchekan FN and shootings in Lloydminster Sk/Ab and high speed chase ending in my home Reserve of Onion Lake FN, all here in Saskatchewan. These are but a small sign and symptom of the need for healing and understanding of the historical legacy we are working from resultant from the Residential Schools. Youth disenfranchisement, disconnect, and familial brokenness… I can go on but first steps. I attended with the ministry team from James Smith to those here in Saskatoon for medical treatment and we together with the Tribal Council Liason Officer went, met, prayed with and anointed the injured in medical and ICU wards.

Healing/ time needed individually and prayers communally are needed as the coming days will reveal the time schedule to have 11 funerals in the coming week/weeks for one single community and two non-stipendary priests. In this as dioceses in this province, we will be having our priests to support and commit to doing funeral services as needed and requested allowing the on reserve priest do the pastoral work of keeping the communities together.

Please continue to keep our province of Saskatchewan in prayers, as this event and realities in which we now find ourselves is not normal and not the common in our people and youth.