



Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc

(Kamloops Indian Band)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc invites Pope Francis to bear witness to Le Estcwéy and meet Kamloops Indian Residential School Survivors

October 28, 2021, Tk'emlúps - Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Chief and Council state the following regarding the [announcement from the Holy See's Press Office](#) indicating that Pope Francis plans to come to Canada in the context of the long-standing pastoral process of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

"It would be deeply meaningful to welcome the Holy See, Pope Francis, to Tk'emlups te Secwepemc, as our heart wrenching news was the first of the wave of confirmations of unmarked graves with thousands more lives lost coming to light. It'd be a historic moment for Kamloops Residential Indian School Survivors and for our community who continues to navigate the impacts following the horrific confirmation of the missing children," declared Kukpi7 Rosanne Casimir.

Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc would like to acknowledge the Bishop Joseph Nguyen, the head of the Roman Catholic Diocese in Kamloops, who expressed his "[deepest sympathy, profound sorrow and genuine apology](#)" to Tk'emlups te Secwépemc Chief Rosanne Casimir and all of the Kamloops First Nations communities.

Albeit that words of regret and remorse have been expressed by local and regional Roman Catholic representatives, there has never been an apology from the highest level of the Roman Catholic Church.

For the "truth" component of Truth and Reconciliation, there has to be an acknowledgment, of the true role of the Catholic Church in the deaths of children placed in their care. The Kamloops Indian Residential School was established in 1890 first as an Industrial School, then a residential school and finally as a residence in 1968 and was under the administration of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate until 1969. This school falls within the historical boundaries of the Archdiocese of Vancouver.

While the Oblates of Mary Immaculate operated the Kamloops Indian Residential School based on policies and legislation of the Government of Canada, the Roman Catholic Church has repeatedly refused to accept responsibility or formally apologize for its direct role in the numerous and horrific abuses committed against Indigenous children through the Residential School system. The missing children, whom Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc refer to as Le Estcwéy, exemplify Indian Residential Schools as a system that perpetuated mass human rights violations that may suggest criminal behavior, including violations of international humanitarian law, and genocide.

The Catholic Church and its entities have not yet implemented the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations addressed to it, nor have they worked collaboratively with First Nations on the missing children, unmarked burials and documenting a complete record of the treatment of children at the schools. They must demonstrate a real commitment to doing what they have repeatedly promised to do. There are many aspects that the Catholic Church were legally obliged to do including their production of “all relevant Indian Residential School records as well as their legal and moral financial obligations to Indian Residential School Survivors,” which we now know they have evaded perhaps with judicial sanction.

“For the Pope to come to Canada without real action, with simply the objective of reconciliation, glosses over and ignores this hard truth. Though some may wish for reconciliation, T’kemplúps te Secwépemc is still saddled with the truth of identifying hundreds of child victims from the Kamloops Indian Residential School,” stated Kukpi7 Rosanne Casimir.

T’kemplúps te Secwépemc calls upon the Roman Catholic Church to:

- To provide an apology from the highest level of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Francis, as one of the many stages of the healing journey. This is the implementation of Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action #58, which demands the Holy See “issue an apology to Survivors, their families, and communities for the Roman Catholic Church’s role in the spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children in Catholic-run residential schools.”
- Accept responsibility for its direct role in the numerous and horrific abuses committed against Indigenous children through the Residential School system, having operated over 70% of all Indian Residential Schools in Canada.
- Demonstrate acts of contrition and living up to the promises made by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops with regards to the disclosure of documents and information to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and of the raising of funds for Indian Residential School survivors.

Kukpi7 Rosanne Casimir is confirmed to be a part of the Papal visit in December representing British Columbia as per the British Columbia Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief Terry Teegee.

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BACKGROUND: Statements made to date by T’kemplúps te Secwépemc regarding the Roman Catholic Church, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and seeking an apology from the Holy See, Pope Francis.

[\(As stated on June 24, 2021\)](#) We, too, have called upon the Pope for an apology and agree with the statement made by Cowessess First Nation Chief Cadmus Delorme. An apology is but one of the many stages of the healing journey.

[\(As stated on July 15, 2021\)](#) The Kamloops Indian Residential School was run by the Roman Catholic Church. Albeit that words of regret and remorse have been expressed by local and regional Roman Catholic representatives, there has never been an apology from the highest level of the Roman Catholic Church.

To be clear, the Roman Catholic Church has repeatedly refused to accept responsibility or formally apologize for its direct role in the numerous and horrific abuses committed against Indigenous children through the Residential School system, despite having operated over 70% of all Indian Residential Schools in Canada. They sought to reduce their obligation to contribute funds to reconciliation purposes. In 2016 Canada permitted the Catholic entities to escape their requirement to raise at least \$25 million as part of the class action settlement, leaving only \$4 million that they raised for these purposes, excusing the \$21 million obligation that was unfulfilled.

[\(As stated on September 30, 2021\)](#): T'kém'lúps te Secwépemc calls upon the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops to work toward the implementation of TRC Call to Action #58, which demands the Holy See “to issue an apology to Survivors, their families, and communities for the Roman Catholic Church’s role in the spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children in Catholic-run residential schools.” Additionally, T'kém'lúps te Secwépemc call upon the CCCB to use their full authority and moral suasion to work with TteS, my Council and the community we represent to assist in the full implementation of TRC Calls to Action #s 71-76.