



MARCH 28, 2024

Tk'emlúps te Secwépeḿc and Catholic Church advance truth and reconciliation with Sacred Covenant

Tk'emlúps te Secwépeḿc, BC – The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Vancouver, Roman Catholic Diocese of Kamloops, and Tk'emlúps te Secwépeḿc have announced a significant step on the path of truth and reconciliation with a new Sacred Covenant to be signed Easter Sunday after a visit to the site of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School.

The Sacred Covenant establishes a shared path to truth and reconciliation and reflects a mutual belief that honour, truth, justice, and healing are necessary to guide the future. The document outlines a historical record, shared truths, and commitments to action. Some of the commitments to action (among others) include:

- Seeking fitting ways to memorialize the children of residential schools;
- Information sharing and full transparency to identify and determine the truth related to missing children, including sharing of archives and records in Catholic possession;
- Catholic parties to offer and support healing services for family members and others whose loved ones attended the former Kamloops Indian Residential School; and
- Catholic parties have committed to work with Tk'emlúps te Secwépeḿc to assist in answering questions related the work during the course of their investigation

The Sacred Covenant will be signed by both parties on Easter Sunday. A joint statement regarding the events of the day and outcomes along with photos from Sunday's private events, will be shared with media on Monday, April 1.



Quotes:

Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Kukpi7 Rosanne Casimir

"I was part of a historical journey to address the Roman Catholic Church at the highest level meeting the Holy See himself representing our survivors and our people that brought forth their messages with the hope of building meaningful steps towards reconciliation while seeking justice in whatever forum our people seek on the atrocities that took place at Roman Catholic run Indian Residential Schools with the realities of representing a First Nation still moving forward the aftermath of a school and the sacred care of unmarked burials.

Reparations are needed with a long journey ahead. Since May 2021 we have been seeking a clear commitment from the Roman Catholic Church to work in partnership with us. The signing of the Sacred Covenant this Easter Sunday, a most holy time for them, makes this commitment profound."

Archbishop of Vancouver J. Michael Miller, CSB

"Easter represents hope and renewal, and we are grateful to Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc for sharing this important day with us as we work together to advance reconciliation. The Residential School system did great damage to Indigenous people, as well as their language, customs, and traditions. We recognize our part in the resulting tragedies and the desire to journey with the people of Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc on a path to healing and understanding."

Backgrounder:

The Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Nation, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Vancouver (RCAV) and the Diocese of Kamloops have been working on the Sacred Covenant for months. An early draft of the covenant was developed by former Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Chief Manny Jules and former Assembly of First Nations Chief Phil Fontaine. That early draft was further enhanced by Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc 13 Grassroots Advisory Council and historians representing Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc and the Catholic parties.

In their efforts to create a common historical record and shared truths, the parties recognized important historical relationships between the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc and the Catholic Church. For example, Chief Johnny Chillihetza of Upper Nicola Band (then referred to as Douglas Lake Indian Band, now integrated into the Upper Nicola Band as one of its 2 communities), Chief Louis Clexlixqen of Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc (at the time referred to as the Kamloops Indian Band), and Oblate priest Father Jean-Marie-Raphael Le Jeune went to Rome in 1904 to petition Pope Pius X to support the Nations in their fight for jurisdiction and title over Indigenous lands.



Media Contacts:

Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Nation
Racelle Kooy
Media Relations
racelle.kooy@ttes.ca

Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Vancouver
Matthew Furtado
Director of Communications
media@rcav.org