



Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

For immediate release
July 15, 2022

MKO's Upcoming Journey to Alberta to Hear Apology from Pope Francis

Treaty Five Territory, Thompson, MB – Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO) is issuing this statement to share reflections about an upcoming journey MKO Survivors will be taking, along with MKO's Grand Chief, to hear from Pope Francis on his visit to Edmonton, Alberta.

Grand Chief Garrison Settee states:

"MKO represents thousand of citizens from Northern Manitoba. Our citizens have a wide range of belief systems, along with diverse spiritual and religious beliefs and practices.

To support the ongoing healing work of the Survivors and their descendants, I am honoured to be making the journey to Alberta later this month to hear from Pope Francis in person. My hope is to provide support to the MKO citizens who are also making the journey to hear from the Catholic leader.

Recalling that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission called upon the Pope 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 children in Catholic-run residential schools, it is my wish to hear a sincere apology from Pope Francis delivered to those who were forced to attend residential schools in Canada.

Survivors have been waiting many years for an apology and I acknowledge the efforts of the Assembly of First Nations and other parties who travelled to the Vatican to request that the Pope travel to Canada to issue an apology. Hearing this apology in person, delivered in Canada, will be helpful to many people in their healing journey.

MKO currently has 38 Survivors registered to make the journey from Manitoba to Alberta for the Papal visit. Any Survivors who would like to join us can apply for a spot on one of our busses. **The deadline to apply is Sunday, July 17 at 3 pm.** Survivors can apply online [here](#).

An apology isn't going to make a difference to everyone. We know there are concerns about the Pope's visit to Canada. I personally will welcome him to meet with First Nations Survivors as I know his presence will be extremely meaningful to those who are making the journey to hear from him in person.

Healing happens differently for all of us. There is no right way to heal from the generational trauma that has been inflicted upon our people due to the residential school system.

I encourage everyone to keep an open mind and seek out those things that will bring healing to you, your family, and your Nation. Let's work together to be part of making our communities a healthier place for our children and grandchildren. Let's continue to support our Survivors as much as we can as they grapple with the painful memories that these ongoing discussions will trigger. I'm thankful for the opportunity to be part of these important discussions."

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