



For immediate release  
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## **Pimicikamak Cree Nation Statement on the Papal Visit**

***Treaty Five Territory/Pimicikamak Cree Nation*** – Pimicikamak Cree Nation is issuing this statement ahead of Pope Francis' apology today in Alberta, Canada.

### ***Pimicikamak Cree Nation Chief David Monias states:***

“Kichi pahkwaysi emayikimaw Kitatamiskatinan katakosinan ota mekinak ministikohk ka ichikatek meena Kanata ka ichikatek

To the pope, greetings and welcome you to Turtle Island, also known as Canada.

Many people are heading to meet you at places of your choosing to deliver an apology to the Indigenous peoples! We had hoped that our community would be one of those places you would visit as we had two residential schools burn down in our community and lives were lost, like in many other residential schools.

Some of those people travelling to see you are the survivors of the residential school of St. Joseph. There will be many leaders, survivors, and families of the missing children who never made it home to see you and listen to you. I myself will not be one of them, instead I decided to remain at home to celebrate our customs and community! Still, many people are believers in God and respect your position.

There are many who long to hear words coming from your mouth such as;

‘I am sorry, we made a mistake in trying to convert you rather than embracing you and your culture.’

‘I am sorry for the abuse and the genocide that we, as the church of Roman Catholics, participated in through the residential schools.’

‘I am sorry for the assimilation of your people and destruction of your culture, your language, and your children.’

'I am sorry for the hunger, the loneliness and hopelessness, the diseases, sexual abuse, physical abuse, mental abuse, emotional abuse, the depression that followed, and many more negative experiences you had to endure.'

'I am sorry for the loss of many children who died at the residential schools and the unmarked graves of those who never made it home!'

'I am sorry for our part in lands and waters that were stolen from your people through the doctrine of discovery, and I renounce the doctrine of discovery claim on our part.'

'To the survivors and their families, I am sorry, I am sorry, and I am sorry, please forgive us!'

'As part of reconciliation, I commit funds to compensate the survivors, to build monuments in remembrance of those who lost lives and never made it home, and to build cultural centres to rebuild the cultures, the customs, and languages!'

I am sure there are many more words that our people expect to be publicly stated, and other expectations by our leaders, our survivors, and the younger generations who felt the wrath of the residential school syndrome!

Ekosani kinanaskomitinan katotamun, kwesk itwe akwa meena peekiskwe ta isi taponeneetamatak.

Manitou Kasawenimik. May God our Creator bless you."

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