



Manitoba Keewatinowí Okimakanak Inc.

For immediate release
July 26, 2022

MKO Response to Papal Apology

Treaty Six Territory, Edmonton, AB – Manitoba Keewatinowí Okimakanak Inc. (MKO) is issuing the following statement in response to the Papal apology delivered by the Pope on July 25, 2022.

Grand Chief Garrison Settee states:

“Taking the time to accompany MKO Survivors to attend a historic meeting with the Pope in Treaty Six territory was my great honour. I’m really happy for the Survivors first and foremost. A lot of them waited so long to get an apology, to hear the Pope say he’s sorry for what happened to us at residential schools.

It was awesome to hear those words for all the people who needed to hear it. I’m happy to see the Survivors receive this apology. I believe it was a sincere apology.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission had 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.

We didn’t hear sexual abuse mentioned in the apology. It was a bit surprising the Doctrine of Discovery was also not mentioned, but maybe it will be down the road.

Some people have expressed their disappointment that they did not hear an acknowledgement of the genocide of Indigenous peoples in relation to the role of the Catholic Church in running residential schools.

Saying sorry and acknowledging the harms that have been caused is just one step of many that need to happen. There is so much more work to be done. I am grateful to experience this historic moment with MKO Survivors who made the journey from Northern Manitoba to be here in Alberta.

The smiles and laughter that were shared helped to lift the burdens our Survivors carry with them. I am thankful for all the connections that have been made. I thank the MKO staff members who have worked tirelessly to provide a supportive travel opportunity for our Survivors.

I am now looking to the Catholic Church to move forward with Indigenous peoples in Canada as better partners. I look forward to seeing the return of all artifacts and documents to the first peoples. We need any records stored in the Vatican as these contain answers that will reveal further truths. Acknowledging the truth and saying sorry is one of the first steps to assist us in collectively moving forward on the path to reconciliation.”

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