

Statement from Archdiocese on Residential School in Kamloops, B.C

Many are aware of the discovery of the remains of 215 young people buried on the grounds of a former Residential School in Kamloops, BC. The effect on the Indigenous peoples of Canada has reopened wounds from their experience with the Residential Schools, directly or through the experience of their relatives. This is a shameful part of our past and, as a member of the Catholic Church, we are deeply sorry for our participation in the Residential School system and the lingering effects it has had on those who died in our care, former students and their descendants.

I would like to draw your attention to three things for a moment. The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops has been working for two years with members of the Indigenous community on a special delegation to formally meet with Pope Francis. The CCCB announced this delegation with Indigenous peoples is going forward. The official announcement is on the CCCB website (ccc.ca) and we linked to it on the archdiocesan website (archoc.ca) for the details. This is an important step that we pray will lead to a papal apology. The second thing is Archbishop Dampousse has been in dialogue with local Indigenous people including Kateri Native Ministry. He had a meeting to discuss with representatives some practical things we can do here in our archdiocese to support, listen to and journey with the local Indigenous community. He will be sharing the fruit of this discussion soon once we have finalized some details. Finally, a reminder that June 21st is National Indigenous Peoples Day. Let us keep the Indigenous people and all who suffer because of the Residential School System in our prayers.