

## **Red Cloud's Statement on Apology from Pope Francis**

Today, Pope Francis issued an historic apology to a delegation of survivors, descendants, and other representatives from Indigenous communities in Canada for the harm caused by boarding schools. In a much longer statement attached below, the Pope said:

I have said this to you and now I say it again. I feel shame – sorrow and shame – for the role that a number of Catholics, particularly those with educational responsibilities, have had in all these things that wounded you, in the abuses you suffered and in the lack of respect shown for your identity, your culture and even your spiritual values. All these things are contrary to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For the deplorable conduct of those members of the Catholic Church, I ask for God's forgiveness, and I want to say to you with all my heart: I am very sorry. And I join my brothers, the Canadian bishops, in asking your pardon."

This apology was long requested by leaders of indigenous groups in Canada. Cassidy Caron, president of the Metis National Council shared that "the Metis elder sitting next to her burst into tears upon hearing what she said was a long-overdue apology." You can read more about the visit and reactions from Indigenous representatives [here](#).

While apologies are important, they are one step in a long road of accountability. The pope also acknowledged this, stating, "Any truly effective process of healing requires concrete actions. In a fraternal spirit, I encourage the Bishops and the Catholic community to continue taking steps towards the transparent search for truth and to foster healing and reconciliation."

These words affirm the work Red Cloud began in 2019 with our Truth and Healing initiative and we will continue to engage in this important endeavor. We believe this statement and apology represents movement forwards towards healing as the pain and trauma are acknowledged at the highest levels of the Catholic Church.

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For more information on Red Cloud's Truth and Healing Initiative, please [visit our website](#) or contact Maka Black Elk, Executive Director for Truth and Healing at [makablackelk@redcloudschool.org](mailto:makablackelk@redcloudschool.org).