



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AMC Acknowledges the Papal Apology

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba - The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) issues this statement regarding Pope Francis' apology and his acknowledgement of the terrible abuse perpetrated by members of the Catholic Church towards First Nation children in residential schools.

Acting Grand Chief Eric Redhead states, "This is a historic moment: one filled with both sorrow and hope. More than 150,000 children were stolen from their homes and forced to attend residential schools between the 1880s and 1996: a number still raw to hear in the midst of this apology and the thousands of unmarked graves being discovered. I note the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 calls to action included a papal apology. This is but one call to action moving First Nations forward and I encourage everyone to continue to heed those calls. I further applaud the delegation that attended Rome to ensure this apology was given. I especially applaud the delegation from Manitoba and the strength, courage and leadership they brought on behalf of First Nations."

AFN Regional Chief Cindy Woodhouse stated, "Today Pope Francis apologized for the Roman Catholic Church's 100 year plus involvement in the abuses suffered by First Nation children in residential schools. This historic papal apology can now help to alleviate some of the ongoing suffering of residential school survivors, their descendants, and their Nations. I was moved by his words that we need to rebuild the relationships between grandparents and grandchildren because that is where growth of unity in family stems from, that passing of knowledge, culture, language and love from generation to generation. This apology is a road to healing for our people so I want to thank Phil Fontaine, the late Ted Fontaine and all residential school survivors in Manitoba and across Canada for sharing their stories for the last several decades. It is that work that helped make this day possible. Lastly, we look forward to Pope Francis' visit to Canada in the coming months as part of the continuation of this healing and reconciliation journey.

"Today marks another step forward in the acknowledgment of the horrors of the past, but further the resilience of our First Nations citizens as they continue to heal and move forward with strength," concluded Acting Grand Chief Redhead.

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About the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

The AMC was formed in 1988 by the Chiefs in Manitoba to advocate on issues that commonly affect First Nations in Manitoba. AMC is an authorized representative of 62 of the 63 First Nations in Manitoba with a total of more than 151,000 First Nation citizens in the province, accounting for approximately 12 percent of the provincial population. AMC represents a diversity of Anishinaabe (Ojibway), Nehetho / Inineu (Cree), Anishinew (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) people.