



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs  
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**May 18, 2022**

### **AMC and AFN Manitoba Responds to the Announced Papal Visit**

**Treaty One Territory, Manitoba** – The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Manitoba Region are disappointed that the Pope’s Canadian summer tour will not include a stop in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

AMC Acting Grand Chief Cornell McLean said, “We encourage Pope Francis to visit First Nations in Manitoba to hear directly from our citizens, especially our Elders, who have waited lifetimes for tangible commitments to reconciliation from the Roman Catholic Church.”

On May 13, 2022, the Vatican confirmed that Pope Francis’ July visit will include stops in Quebec City, Edmonton, and Iqaluit. In March, a First Nations delegation, including AFN Regional Chief Cindy Woodhouse and former AMC Grand Chief Phil Fontaine, met with Pope Francis in Rome, where he delivered a public apology for the Roman Catholic Church’s primary role in operating Canada’s residential school institutions.

“The world is watching the Pope as he visits Canada to deliver an apology on our traditional territories, and the path forward must include First Nations in Manitoba,” said AFN Regional Chief Cindy Woodhouse. “Healing will take a significant commitment from the church, and the first step in that journey is meeting with First Nations on our territories.”

As of 2016, Winnipeg had the largest metropolitan Indigenous population of over 92,000 people and 18 residential institutions in Manitoba, where thousands of First Nations children endured physical, emotional, sexual, spiritual, and cultural violence. The AMC and the AFN Manitoba Region have long sought an apology from the Roman Catholic Church and justice for its complicit role in residential institutions.

“As we approach the 1st anniversary since discovering the 215 unmarked graves of children with over another thousand plus uncovered on Canadian residential institutions’ grounds, the Roman Catholic Church should be mindful of how reconciliation is navigated,” said Acting Grand Chief Cornell McLean. “It is crucial that the Papal visit acknowledges the church’s complicit role in the genocide of First Nations of Manitoba. However, for an apology to have meaning, it must be on our Nations’ ancestral lands.”

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**For more information, please contact:**

**Communications Team**

**Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs**

**Email: [media@manitobachiefs.com](mailto:media@manitobachiefs.com)**

## **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), Anishinineu (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) people.