

List of some of the apologies by Catholic leaders and groups:

Some of these (not all) can be found in full on the CCCB website at:

<http://www.cccb.ca/site/eng/component/content/article/257-indigenous-peoples/3207-catholic-statement-of-regret-on-the-former-residential-schools>

A few others can be found at: <http://www.cccb.ca/site/eng/commissions-committees-and-aboriginal-council/national-commissions/christian-unity-religious-relations-with-the-jews-and-interfaith-dialogue/documents/3898-truth-and-reconciliation-commission>

March 1991 Statement by the National Meeting on Indian Residential Schools held in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan - March 13-15, 1991 after a three-day session on residential schools. (*excerpt:*)

“We are sorry and deeply regret the pain, suffering and alienation that so many experienced. We have heard their cries of distress, feel their anguish and want to be part of the healing process.”

July 1991 The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate - An Apology to the First Nations of Canada by the Oblate Conference of Canada 24 July 1991, (*excerpt:*)

“We apologize for the part we played in the cultural, linguistic, and religious imperialism that was part of this mentality and were, in fact often a key player in its implementation. We recognize that this mentality has, from the beginning, and ever since, continually threatened the cultural, linguistic, and religious traditions of the Native peoples....

“We wish to apologize for the part we played in the setting up and the maintaining of the schools themselves, recognizing that the biggest abuse was not what happened in the schools, but that the schools themselves happened... that the primal bond inherent within families was violated as a matter of policy, that children were usurped from their natural communities, and that, implicitly and explicitly, these schools operated out of the premise that European languages, traditions, and religious practices. The residential schools were an attempt to assimilate aboriginal peoples and we played an important role in the unfolding of this design. For this we sincerely apologize.

“We wish to apologize in a very particular way for the instances of physical and sexual abuse that occurred in those schools... We deeply, and very specifically, apologize to every victim of such abuse...

“Finally, we wish to apologize as well for our past dismissal of many of the riches of native religious tradition. We broke some of your peace pipes and we considered some of your sacred practices as pagan and superstitious... We apologize for this blindness and disrespect.

http://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/oblate_apology_english.pdf

December 1992 - Halifax Archbishop Homily Dec. 6, 1992 by Most Reverend Austin E. Burke's, Archbishop of Halifax, at St. Catherine's, Mi'kmaq parish
(*excerpt:*)

"I cannot change the past. I cannot erase the damage that has been done. I can express my own sorrow, and the sorrow of your brothers and sisters in our Church of Halifax for your suffering. I apologize for whatever pain the Church itself may have been responsible for causing in the Residential School. The Church is not meant to hurt, but to heal – and I must say that I am truly sorry if people caused some lingering hurts in the name of the Church."

<http://www.catholicahifax.org/images/stories/Archdioceses%20Apology%20to%20the%20First%20Nations%20People%202.pdf>

May 1993 - Jesuit order statement - Father Peter Hans Kolvenbach, SJ, Superior General of the Society of Jesus, "Apology to Native Americans for Past Mistakes," Idaho, May 16, 1993 (*excerpt:*)

"In recent years, religious leaders such as the Catholic bishops in the Northwest have publicly acknowledged the ways the church was insensitive toward your tribal customs, language and spirituality. I want to take this moment to add my voice to theirs. The Society of Jesus is sorry for the mistakes it has made in the past. ..."

http://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/Jesuit_Apology.pdf

April 2008 - Open letter of the Most Reverend Gerald Pettipas, C.S.s.R., Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan– 28 April, 2008 (*excerpt:*)

"I take this opportunity to share with you, the Native Peoples of this Archdiocese, my sadness for the cultural and personal wounds that many of you carry, arising from the residential school experience. I acknowledge that these are not only personal wounds, but scars that you bear as a whole community. To the extent that you may feel that the Catholic Church was complicit in these harms, I express my deep sorrow and ask your forgiveness. "

http://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/An_Open_Letter_to_Native_Peoples_in_AGM_Apr_2008.pdf

March 2008 - Verbal apology of the Most Reverend Albert LeGatt, Bishop of Saskatoon, delivered on March 9, 2008 at Remembering the Children event, Saskatoon, SK, (*excerpt:*)

"I wish to express my deep regret and deep sadness over the loss of culture and language and spiritual values experienced by many who attended these residential schools... and for the sense of hurt and loss this brought about."

<https://saskatoonrcdiocese.com/sites/default/files/ourdiocese/groupfiles/2008-04.pdf> - page 2

March 2008 - Verbal apology of the Most Reverend Sylvain Lavoie, OMI, Archbishop of Keewatin-Le Pas, delivered on March 9, 2008, at Remembering the Children event, Saskatoon, SK, (excerpt:)

“For the wrong doing, the physical abuse, the sexual abuse committed by any of the personnel who staffed the schools, and for the harm this caused the children and their families, I am deeply sorry. I apologize. I ask forgiveness.”

<https://saskatoonrcdiocese.com/sites/default/files/ourdiocese/groupfiles/2008-04.pdf> - page 2

April 29, 2009 – Chief Phil Fontaine and other Indigenous and Church leaders had a private audience with Pope Benedict XVI in Rome – Following the meeting, the Holy See Press Office issued the following communiqué:

“Given the sufferings that some indigenous children experienced in the Canadian Residential School system, the Holy Father expressed his sorrow at the anguish caused by the deplorable conduct of some members of the Church and he offered his sympathy and prayerful solidarity. His Holiness emphasized that acts of abuse cannot be tolerated in society. He prayed that all those affected would experience healing, and he encouraged First Nations Peoples to continue to move forward with renewed hope.”

http://www.vatican.va/resources/resources_canada-first-nations-apr2009_en.html

April 2009 – Statement on Behalf of Congregations of Women Religious Involved in the Indian Residential Schools of Canada presented at the time of First Nations/Catholic Church Delegation to Rome and the Historic Meeting with Pope Benedict XVI by Sr. Marie Zarowny, SSA and adapted slightly for presentation at the Truth and Reconciliation National Event in Vancouver in 2013 – **dated April 30, 2009 and Sept. 21, 2013 (excerpt:)**

“We now know that the residential school system itself, initiated by the Federal Government and in which we participated, was racist and discriminatory. It brought about a form of cultural oppression and personal shame that has had a lasting effect not only on those who attended the schools but also on subsequent generations. We carry immense sorrow for having contributed to this tragedy, a sorrow that stays within our hearts.

“We also now know that many children in our care suffered unspeakable abuse and mistreatment. Some Sisters have been accused of actual abuse; many others have been accused of not protecting those in their care. We are deeply grieved by all these revelations.”

May 2009 - Apology of the Most Reverend Murray Chatlain, Bishop of Mackenzie-Fort Smith, May 2, 2009 at Inuvik, North West Territories
(excerpt:)

“The sad part for me is that our Church has played a significant role in that suffering. Having listened to many people and hearing the deep pain, I want to apologize for: our disruption of families and parenting, our involvement in the devaluing of aboriginal language, culture and spirituality, our association with the Government of Canada in their policy of assimilation, and our failure to protect children from serious physical and sexual abuse.....

“Today I stand before you and say that I am sorry and ask your forgiveness for the sins of our Church. I pray that the Church learns from the past; that we do not act out of paternalism, look for quick fixes, or simply distance ourselves from the problems. We are here today and there are many problems that face us right now. Together we need to find new hope and faith and self-respect. Together we need to break cycles of abuse and find more positive and real images of our loving God. I pray that we may have a deeper openness to each other, a renewed dialogue between equals, and even a deeper love. This will not be easy, but through the power of God, our Creator, and His Son Jesus, and grace of the Holy Spirit, my hope is strong.”

http://mfsdiocese.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Apology_Inuvik_May_2_2009.pdf

June 2012 – Letter from the Catholic Bishops of Saskatchewan ahead of the TRC national event in Saskatoon, SK. – The letter dated June 7, 2012, was signed by Most Reverend Daniel Bohan, Archbishop of Regina; Most Reverend Donald Bolen, Bishop of Saskatoon; Most Reverend Sylvain Lavoie, Archbishop of Keewatin-Le Pas; Most Reverend Bryan Bayda, Bishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon, and Most Reverend Albert Thevenot, Bishop of Prince Albert (excerpt:)

“In recent years, apologies have been extended by Catholic religious communities involved with the schools and by groups of bishops and church leaders. We also apologize for the abuse which took place at those schools, and for our part in the suppression of First Nations and Métis culture and language. In 2009, in a meeting with First Nations leaders, Pope Benedict XVI ‘expressed his sorrow at the anguish caused by the deplorable conduct of some members of the Church and he offered his sympathy and prayerful solidarity’ with those negatively impacted by the Residential Schools. But we also need to move beyond apologies. The apologies are the seeds which we hope will lead to a bountiful harvest of reconciliation and healing.”

https://saskatoonrcdiocese.com/sites/default/files/trc_letter_june_2012_sask_bishops_0.pdf

August 2013 – Letter from the Bishops of British Columbia and Yukon – invitation to attend the Truth and Reconciliation Commission – *Signed by Most Reverend J. Michael Miller, CSB, Archbishop of Vancouver, Most Reverend Richard Gagnon, Bishop of Victoria, Most Reverend John Corriveau, OFM Cap, Bishop of Nelson, Most Reverend David J. Monroe, Bishop of Kamloops, Most Reverend Gary Gordon, DD, Bishop of Whitehorse, Most Reverend Ken Nowakowski, Bishop of New Westminster Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy, and Most Reverend Stephen Jensen, Bishop of Prince George - dated Aug. 15, 2013 (excerpt:)*

“As Bishops of British Columbia and Yukon, we once again express our deepest regret and we apologize for any abuse which took place in the residential schools under our care. Likewise, we recognize the error of a government policy aimed at suppressing First Nations’ culture and language. While conscious of this history, the time has come to take the next step forward in healing this legacy of painful wounds and to foster a renewed mutual understanding.”

February 2014 - Statement The Catholic Bishops of Alberta and the Northwest Territories on the occasion of the Truth and Reconciliation Event in Edmonton, Alberta – *signed by Most Reverend Richard Smith, Archbishop of Edmonton; Most Reverend Frederick Henry, Bishop of Calgary; Most Reverend Gregory J. Bittman, Auxiliary Bishop of Edmonton; Most Reverend Gerard Pettipas, CSSR, Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan, Most Reverend David Motiuk, Bishop of the Ukrainian Eparchy of Edmonton; and Most Reverend Mark Hagemoen, Bishop of Mackenzie-Fort Smith - dated Feb. 24, 2014 (excerpt:)*

“We are adding our voice to those of the Catholic bishops and leaders of religious communities across Canada who have already expressed words of apology and regret. We, the Catholic Bishops of Alberta and Northwest Territories, apologize to those who experienced sexual and physical abuse in Residential Schools under Catholic administration. We also express our apology and regret for Catholic participation in government policies that resulted in children being separated from their families, and often suppressed Aboriginal culture and language at the Residential Schools.”

https://www.caedm.ca/Portals/0/documents/archbishops%20office/2014-02-24_TruthandReconciliation_Bishops_statement.pdf

May 2015 – Letter to the Archdiocese of Ottawa by Archbishop Terrence Prendergast, SJ, of Ottawa on the release of the TRC report in May 2015 *(excerpt:)*

“We face the past and sincerely ask for forgiveness. Your awareness of history, your presence at events, and your prayers will help the Church express its genuine desire to work with Aboriginal communities to build a shared future of mutual respect.”

June 2015 – Statement by Most Reverend J. Michael Miller, CSB, Archbishop of Vancouver on the occasion of the Release of the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission – dated June 2, 2015 (*excerpt:*)

“I wish to repeat once again the Archdiocese’s sincere and heartfelt apology for the role that the Church played in the federal government’s policy which involved separating children from their families and placing them in residential schools. Likewise I acknowledge our error in supporting a policy aimed at suppressing Aboriginal culture and language. This federal policy contributed to the pain and suffering experienced by generations of First Nations children and adults.

“Five residential schools existed within the boundaries of the Archdiocese. During the century that they operated there were, tragically, innumerable incidents of cultural, emotional, physical and sexual abuse. We failed to live up to the trust placed in us.”

http://rcav.org/wp-content/uploads/Apology_and_Hope.pdf

July 2015 – Pope Francis apologized in Santa Cruz, Bolivia for the crimes committed against the native peoples during the conquest of America (*excerpt translated:*)

“I say this to you with regret: many grave sins were committed against the native peoples of America in the name of God. My predecessors acknowledged this, CELAM, the Council of Latin American Bishops, has said it, and I too wish to say it. Like Saint John Paul II, I ask that the Church – I repeat what he said – “kneel before God and implore forgiveness for the past and present sins of her sons and daughters”. [I would also say, and here I wish to be quite clear, as was Saint John Paul II: I humbly ask forgiveness, not only for the offenses of the Church herself, but also for crimes committed against the native peoples during the so-called conquest of America.”

https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/july/documents/papa-francesco_20150709_bolivia-movimenti-popolari.html