



Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon
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May 31, 2021
Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

**On the occasion of the discovery of 215 graves at the
Kamloops Indian Residential School**

Dear Clergy, Religious, and Lay Faithful of the Diocese of Saskatoon:

I join with my brother bishops in B.C. and beyond with expressing on behalf of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, my sadness and sympathy to Chief Rosanne Casimir and the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation who are mourning the loss of young people upon the discovery of 215 unmarked graves on the site of the former residential school on the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation. I also express the sympathy for the many residential school survivors and their families for whom this news is again the occasion for great mourning and grief.

I acknowledge and honour the event of Sunday afternoon, May 30, 2021 at St. Paul's Cathedral and the memorial tribute of the many children's shoes and other artifacts to honour the memory of the children at residential schools. These items will be left in place in the coming days, in solidarity with other memorials and events being held by schools, our provincial and federal governments, and other organizations.

Yesterday during the morning Sunday Mass at Holy Family Cathedral, a moment of silence was observed to remember the 215 souls and all residential school survivors, their families and community members. This silence was to honour others and to honour God on the occasion of the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity. While we may not have the words and plan worked out – God shows us through Jesus Christ the way of love, respect, accompaniment, and healing that we must follow.

Since the conclusion of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2015, we in Canada have come a long way. But we have a way yet to go. I quote a part of the Catholic Bishops of Saskatchewan statement of last year regarding racism and the call for Respect and Caring.

 In all things we are *rooted in Christ*,
in His desire to bring God's love to all peoples.

“There is much to affirm on this issue in our Catholic tradition, beginning in the first book of the Bible, where we read how all peoples are created in the image and likeness of God Himself. (see Genesis 1:26-27) With the privilege of being created *fully human* comes the responsibility to live and act towards others as God acts towards us. ... The privilege of our humanity carries with it the great responsibility of the preferential care of our brothers and sisters – especially those who deal with obstacles, injustices, or other barriers to their human flourishing. “

May this occasion of mourning and grief also be the occasion for renewed commitment and efforts to build caring relationships between our Indigenous and non-Indigenous brothers and sisters, in a world that continues to grapple with a history that often falls short. The discovered 215 graves is a reminder of this history. Our respectful silence and solidarity together can be a part of the long and careful journey to an unknown and hopeful future.

Yours in Christ



✠ Most Reverend Mark A. Hagemoen



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