



Statement Regarding Loss of Lives of Indigenous Children

Along with other members of our St. Paul's College community, we were troubled and deeply saddened to hear the news regarding the discovery of 215 buried bodies of children who attended the Kamloops Residential School located on the traditional lands of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation. This is only one chapter in the terrible legacy of residential schools in Canada. [The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has stated:](#)

Large numbers of the Aboriginal children who were sent to residential schools never returned to their home communities. Some of these children ran away, while others died at the schools. The exact number of children who died at school may never be known, but the death rates for many schools, particularly during times of epidemic or disease, were very high. Sometimes parents never found out what happened to their children. The students who did not return have come to be known as the Missing Children.

Where the Brandon Indian Residential School was located, a similar site containing the unmarked graves of Indigenous children has also been confirmed for many years, [with work now underway to learn more about the children buried there](#).

We anticipate hearing more information in the coming months and years about the unmarked graves of Indigenous children in such sites located in our province and elsewhere across Canada. The legacy of residential schools is a terrible one, involving generations of Indigenous children who were taken from their homes, their families, and brought to schools where they suffered many forms of abuse, including malnutrition, isolation, and sexual abuse.

[We concur with University of Manitoba President Michael Benarroch's recent statement:](#)

The University of Manitoba community grieves for the 215 children whose remains were found at the site of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. The discovery of these children, whose lives were stolen from their communities, is devastating. The University of Manitoba, in partnership with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) and Indigenous partners, is committed to face the painful truths of our history and present, and move forward on the path to reconciliation. We will work to honour the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The Catholic Church in Canada, including many religious orders, was deeply involved in the operation of many of these schools. Continuing action is needed to walk in many ways on the road to reconciliation. We are heartened with the news as reported in the *Winnipeg Free Press* on 9 June 2021 confirming that a meeting of Pope Francis and a Canadian delegation of Indigenous leaders will occur this fall. We see this as a significant step, one of many, on the long and challenging path towards reconciliation.

In this statement, we are confirming the words we say at all of our St. Paul's College events: "St. Paul's College, the University of Manitoba campus, and our City of Winnipeg sit at the crossroads of the Anishinaabe, Métis, Cree, Dakota and Oji-Cree Nations. We acknowledge our location on Treaty One territory, which is the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe peoples and the homeland of the Métis Nation. We remain committed to the pathways of reconciliation."

The flag in front of St. Paul's College is at half mast for a total of 215 hours.

Dr. Christopher Adams,
Rector, St. Paul's College

Dr. Dilantha Fernando,
Dean of Studies, St. Paul's College