



National Centre for
Truth and Reconciliation
UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

Centre national pour la
vérité et la réconciliation
UNIVERSITÉ DU MANITOBA

His Holiness,
Pope Francis
The Apostolic Palace
00120 Vatican City

14 March 2022

Your Holiness:

On behalf of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR), it is my great honour to present to you a gift of the Residential School Survivors' Flag.

The flag was created by Residential School Survivors to share their thoughts, emotions, experiences and hopes and to honour all Survivors, families, and communities impacted by the residential school system in Canada. The flag was unveiled for Canada's first National Day of Truth and Reconciliation on September 30, 2021.

The idea for the Survivors' Flag was first discussed among Survivors after a burial site, potentially including unmarked graves of more than 200 children, was located at the site of the former Kamloops Residential School in May 2021. The Survivors' Flag was created through six weeks of discussions among more than 30 Inuit, Mi'kmaq, Atikamekw, Cree, Ojibway, Dakota, Mohawk, Dene, Nuu-chah-nulth, Secwepemc, and Métis Nation Survivors. The flag was completed by Métis designer Shaun Vincent and his firm Vincent Design.

Each element of the flag was selected by Survivors to reflect on the history of the Residential School system. Symbols of Métis Nation, First Nations, and Inuit cultures – the sash, the eagle feather and the Inukshuk – are enclosed within the Sun and highlighted by stars and planets. This represents the divine protection that brought the Survivors back to their families, communities, and cultures. The seeds that rest below ground at the base of the image represent the spirits of the children who never returned home.

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The NCTR is making the Survivors' Flag available to any individual, organization or institution that wants honour Residential Schools Survivors and show support for the shared journey of reconciliation.

The NCTR was created as part of the mandate of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. The NCTR is a steward of the truths shared by Survivors. We work to ensure that the full truth of the Residential School system is revealed, and that this tragic history is never forgotten.

In the past year, the NCTR welcomed the apology to Residential School Survivors by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. We are also grateful for the opportunity to now collaborate with the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate to access critical records in the Oblate Archive in Rome.

Like others representing Survivors, the NCTR is hopeful that there will be a Papal Visit to Canada in 2022 and that Your Holiness will honour the occasion by offering a formal apology to Residential School Survivors, their families, and communities for the Roman Catholic Church's role in the spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Nation children in Catholic-run residential schools.

On such occasion, it would be a welcome symbol if the Survivors' Flag were to be flown in Vatican City.

With every good wish to Your Holiness, I am, Sincerely Yours,

Stephanie Scott,
Executive Director

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