



Le Métis



Like all Indigenous people in Canada, particularly those of us who experienced harm at the hands of individuals who hid their wrongdoings behind the Catholic Church, I was relieved to hear Pope Francis deliver a heartfelt apology, which included the statement: "I ask for God's forgiveness and I want to say to you with all my heart: I am very sorry. And I join my brothers, the Canadian bishops, in asking your pardon. Clearly, the content of the faith cannot be transmitted in a way contrary to the faith itself: Jesus taught us to welcome, love, serve and not judge; it is a frightening thing when, precisely in the name of the faith, counter-witness is rendered to the Gospel."

I know many Red River Métis have been waiting for this apology for many years. I hope it will help begin the healing process and unite us on this journey of reconciliation, revitalization, and renewal.

As part of our journey toward a renewed relationship with the Catholic Church, your Métis Government is hard at work preparing for our upcoming pilgrimage to Rome to meet with the Holy Father on April 21. The delegates attending this meeting on behalf of all Red River Métis have the honour of being the first Indigenous Canadians to meet with the Holy Father since he delivered his apology to us all, for the harms done by the Catholic Church.

Easter marks the resurrection of Jesus Christ and is a celebration of life. There can be no more fitting time for us to deliver our message to His Holy Father about revitalizing our longstanding and historic relationship with the Catholic Church.

We have had to overcome many obstacles, including waves of COVID-19, in order for this meeting to take place. There is a saying that God works in mysterious ways, and perhaps this is why our meeting is happening so quickly after his apology and at a time of year that is linked so deeply to rebirth and renewal.

I want to share with Citizens that one of the things I will be focusing on during our meeting with His Holiness is making a strong case for him to come to the heart of our Homeland, in what is now Winnipeg, to bless the grave of our great leader, Louis Riel.

As our Citizens know, Riel was not a man of arms. Instead, he believed in the power of negotiation and discussion. When he went into battle, he did not carry a gun. He carried a crucifix.

Yet, he was found guilty of treason and sentenced to hang. Even in the face of that injustice, he forgave all those who spoke against him. He gave his fate to God and wrote about his trust that God would be his comfort and his salvation.

I know Louis Riel is in a better place now, smiling down upon us. As a leader, I have an honour and privilege that he could have never dreamed of – to share my heart with the Holy Father. I know Riel would have cherished this opportunity and I hope that we do well by him and his vision.

The presence of the Holy Father in our Homeland, and a blessing delivered at his gravesite in St. Boniface, would be powerful signs of a return to our alliance and partnership. It would show deep understanding of our intertwined history with the Catholic Church, a relationship that was fundamental to the shaping of our country.

Should this be possible, I can assure all Citizens that we will work diligently with the Canadian Conference

of Catholic Bishops, as well as our Manitoba-based Archbishop of Winnipeg Richard Gagnon and Archbishop of St. Boniface Albert LeGatt, toward the goal of receiving His Holiness in our Homeland and giving this important event the respect and ceremony it is due.

With this historic meeting, we hope to expand on our dialogue with the Catholic Church and continue our journey forward together for the betterment of our people. As a People, we are asking for nothing more from the Holy Father.

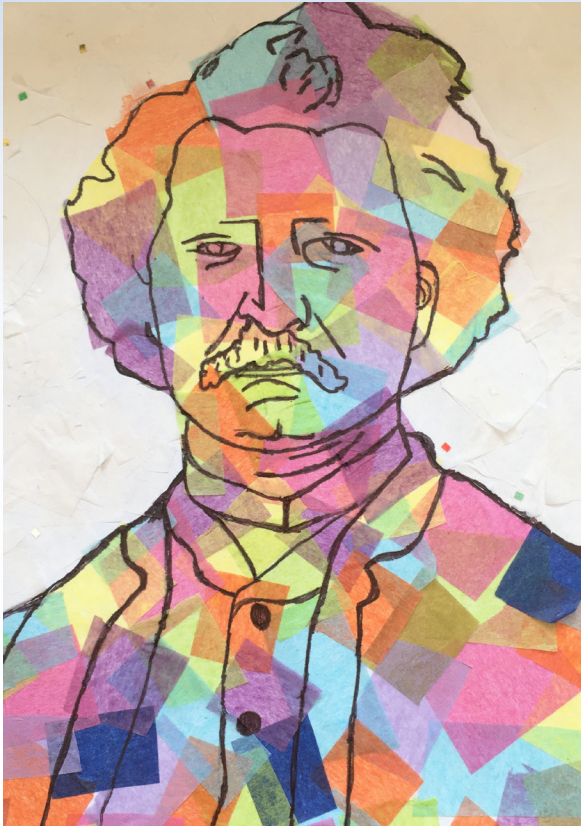
I also look forward to sharing insights and experiences with you all when we return from our pilgrimage, so you can feel what our delegates are feeling – that this is a new era for our long-standing relationship with the Catholic Church, informed by reconciliation, renewal, and hope for a positive journey forward.

If we've learned anything from COVID-19, it's the benefits and value of digital participation in our events. For our upcoming pilgrimage to Rome, we will make good use of the communication tools available. Along with formal communications like press releases and letters to Citizens, I encourage you to keep listening to my weekly report on NCI for *Métis Hour* x2, and keep an eye on our social media for videos, pictures, and posts about our visit with His Holiness, along with our other stops at shrines, sacred sites, and historical locations.

Meeqwetch,

President David Chartrand. LL.D. (hon). O.M. ∞

LRI having fun with Métis history and culture



The Louis Riel collage has been a popular workshop activity.



Teresa Byrne, History and Culture Coordinator for LRI, leads the workshops, which embed Métis history into hands-on activities.

Interested in the buffalo hunt? Making a Métis sash? Want to learn about the life of Louis Riel and the creation of Manitoba? The Louis Riel Institute (LRI) offers the opportunity to explore Red River Métis history and culture in a dynamic, engaging way.

A Manitoba Métis Federation affiliate responsible for Métis culture, heritage, and education, the LRI customizes workshops and courses to suit the needs of organizations seeking to learn more about the Red River Métis.

The workshops, led by History and Culture Coordinator Teresa Byrne, embed Métis history into hands-on activities – from sash weaving, to a paper tuppie, to a Louis Riel collage.

“My workshops focus on learning the different traditional art forms. One example would be learning about Louis Riel, and walking away with a Louis Riel collage,” Byrne said. “The workshops provide a hands-on approach in teaching our Métis history and culture.”

The courses, led by Shirley Delorme Russell, Instructor of Métis History and Culture, can be taught in English or French, and teach Métis history through storytelling. The courses are interactive, and include a lecture, question and answer period, and video and radio clips.

“For my courses, I ensure that history is never boring,” said Delorme Russell.

The most popular so far has been the Red River Métis History course, which can be condensed to take up anywhere from half an hour or a half day, or expanded to a full-day or multi-day course. While the course covers the entirety of Métis history, it can be tailored to a specific time period, person, or event upon request.

For the workshops, a popular activity has been the Louis Riel collage.

“The Louis Riel collage has been extremely popular,” Byrne said. “For example, I led a workshop for Louis Riel Day with younger children, and then led another one for the entire school at Virden Junior High School.”

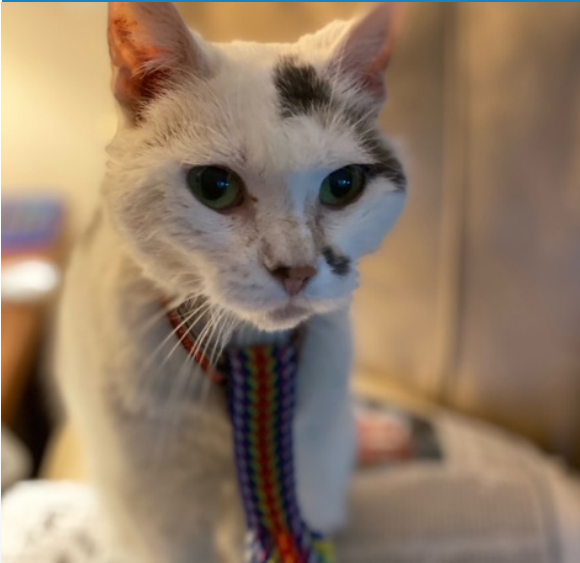
From schools and post-secondary institutions to Locals to corporations, LRI can cater to a wide range of age levels, from young children to adult.

“Courses can be taught for all age groups and sectors, including day care, elementary, junior high, high school, adult, businesses, professionals, or government,” Delorme Russell said of her courses. “They are easily adaptable and varied for a wide audience.”

For more information about LRI workshops and courses, email lriculture@lrilearn.ca.

Community Photo

Le Metis' Community Photo section invites Métis Citizens to send in photos to be featured in our newsletter. If you have a photo that celebrates the Métis Nation, send it to communications@mmf.mb.ca and you may see it in print!



Getting ready for the bison hunt



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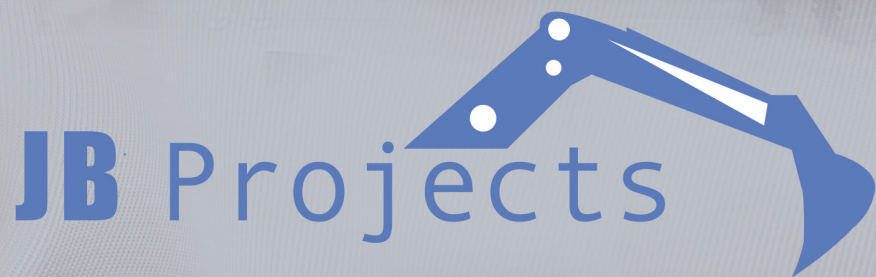
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