

June 1, 2021

Statement from Concerned Lay Catholics Regarding the Discovery of the Remains of 215 children on the grounds of former Kamloops Residential School.

It is with heavy hearts and deep sorrow that Concerned Lay Catholics acknowledges the horrific discovery on May 27, 2021 of an unmarked grave containing the remains of 215 Indigenous children on the grounds of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School, in British Columbia, Canada. As an organization committed to amplifying the voices of those left out in our Church, CLC strives to become ever more aware of the impact of colonialism and ongoing racism on the peoples who first lived on this land. We are shocked and outraged to learn of the unfathomable cruelty and heartless indignity done to these children, their families and their communities. The fact that it was committed by members of our Church and paid for by our federal government, reflecting government policy towards Indigenous peoples, requires us as settler people and as Catholics, to reflect long and hard on how we must contribute to finding a path forward, a path that will lead to true healing and just restoration for all that has been lost.

Our prayers and sympathy can never be enough. Concerned Lay Catholics supports the call of Indigenous leaders for an examination of every former residential school site after the discovery at the former Kamloops residential school. We also support the passage of Bill C-15 currently before the Senate which will commit our country to the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We invite other concerned lay Catholics to join us in these efforts.

Nothing will bring these children back to their families and restore them to the life that was so callously taken from them; but, as Chief Robert Joseph prayed at the mourning ceremony on May 30, “may their lives and their suffering not have been in vain.”

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<https://concernedlaycatholics.ca/residential-school-survivors>

