



NEWS RELEASE

CATHOLICS TO PARTICIPATE IN TRUTH & RECONCILIATION EVENT Alberta-NWT Bishops to issue letter of invitation and expression of apology

Edmonton, February 20, 2014 – The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) will hold its final National Event in Edmonton, March 27-30. The Commission is documenting the history and legacy of Indian Residential Schools in Canada as a necessary step in the long-term process of healing and reconciliation among Aboriginal peoples, government, churches and the Canadian people. The schools were instituted and funded by the federal government and administered by Canadian church organizations. Alberta was home to more Indian Residential Schools than any other province, including 15 that were operated by Catholic dioceses or religious congregations.

The Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton will be marking the Truth and Reconciliation event in a number of ways:

- Most Rev. Richard Smith, Archbishop of Edmonton, is inviting all Catholics to support this historic event through prayer and if possible through attendance at all or part of the sessions. The Archbishop will participate in the event himself and offer a gesture of reconciliation.
- Archbishop Smith has designated Sunday, March 2, as "Truth and Reconciliation Sunday," a day when Catholics at all parishes in the Archdiocese will pray during Sunday Mass for the success of the Edmonton TRC event and for true reconciliation and healing with Aboriginal peoples.
- Catholic clergy, religious and lay people will join volunteers from other church communities in the Churches Listening Area at the TRC event. There, former students of the Indian Residential Schools will be able to speak of their personal experiences with representatives from churches that administered the schools.
- About 250 students from the Edmonton Catholic School District will attend the TRC's special youth-oriented educational sessions on March 27. These sessions aim to promote understanding of how Indian Residential Schools affected students and their descendants and will enable young people to share with commission members their ideas on fostering reconciliation.
- In advance of the TRC event, the Catholic Bishops of Alberta and the Northwest Territories have prepared a Letter of Invitation to all Catholics in the region. This letter includes an expression of apology.

Members of the news media are invited to join Archbishop Smith for the Edmonton release of this letter:

Date: Monday, February 24

Time: 10 a.m.

Place: Ben Calf Robe School, 11833 – 64 Street, Edmonton

For more information, please contact:

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