



# *The Archdiocese of Regina*

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## **Statement from the Archdiocese of Regina regarding recent findings at Star Blanket Cree Nation**

To Chief Michael Starr, the Star Blanket Cree Nation, and all those who are impacted by today's findings, we stand with you in solidarity and are committed to walking alongside you during these challenging days. We understand that the announcement of the recent discovery of human remains on the grounds of the former Qu'Appelle Indian Residential School is deeply traumatizing. It is especially difficult to hear that it is the remains of a child that have been found. It is a painful reminder of all the children who did not return home from residential schools. Each finding like this can re-open wounds and re-surface inter-generational trauma for survivors and loved ones pointing us to the challenges and hurts that remain to be healed.

As mentioned by Star Blanket representatives earlier today, the archdiocese has been actively working to support the Star Blanket Cree Nation's ground penetrating radar process, including providing materials such as lumber and flags to mark off search areas. We support you in all of the remaining work that needs to be done following your initial round of GPR work. Your acknowledgment that the 2000 initial hits are potentially impacted by geological abnormalities and challenges particular to that area, points to further work needed, as you indicated, including core samplings and DNA testing. The work of reconciliation rightly needs to be based upon the truth and we support all of your efforts to seek that truth.

We remain committed to continuing and strengthening relationships that we have already begun to form based on mutual respect, understanding, and compassion with the Indigenous community as we support the important work being done to honour the memory of residential school students, survivors and intergenerational survivors. It has been a privilege and honour to help in concrete ways in this process. As the investigations continue and the focus is refined, we remain committed to offering assistance through volunteers and supplies where needed, as well as by working closely with the Oblate community to assist the project management team in accessing archives and supporting community members with documentation and files.

We reiterate our past apologies and ask for forgiveness for the harm and suffering caused by the church's role in the residential school system. At the same time, we echo the remarks of Pope Francis, who, during his recent visit to Canada, reminded us that while words and gestures can be an important

starting place, "most words and deeds of reconciliation take place at the local level, in communities like this, where individuals and families travel side-by-side, day by day. To pray together, (and) to help one another..." To the extent that it is welcomed by survivors, intergenerational survivors, Indigenous leaders, elders, and knowledge keepers, we remain committed to continuing to work towards truth, reconciliation, and healing with the Indigenous community.