



# Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council

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## **Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council Exhort the Pope put Concrete Action to Apology**

Nuu-chah-nulth Territories: Following the Pope's apology, today our thoughts are with all the residential school survivors/thrivers and the many generations of our people who were and continue to be traumatically impacted by the legacy of the Indian residential school system. None of us are untouched. We send strength and good energy and encourage anyone who may be impacted to seek help if needed.

The Pope's apology has affected everyone differently. Some are happy because he finally apologized. Others do not care; they did not want an apology from him. Others are angry because he did not apologize on behalf of the church, only himself and "some others". Others still want him to apologize on First Nation lands and face the very people that these institutions were made to commit genocide against, not doing it safely from his home and country. The TRC calls to action said the apology had to be done in Canada. Bottom line, the apology did not hit the mark for everyone.

If the Pope comes to Canada to do a formal apology, the apology must be far ranging and include action items that will begin the process of healing the many traumas caused as a direct and indirect result of the Indian residential school system. The church needs to admit the role it played in actively pursuing the genocide of an entire race of human beings. He needs to not only admit, as he did, that the Indian residential school system severely impaired our language, culture, communities, and governance but to offer tangible ways of righting the many wrongs the catholic church committed.

Judith Sayers, President of the NTC states "People need to realize that an apology can never take away the intense and ongoing pain and trauma of sexual, physical, mental and emotional abuse that was wrought upon our people in residential schools and the negative impacts that had on generations of our families and communities. Are words enough? Words are a start, but it should never have taken this many years and so much effort to get an apology. The last residential school closed in 1996 and First Nations have been calling on the Pope all these years without an apology or even an acknowledgement."

Mariah Charleson, Vice President of NTC added "The apology would have meant more with concrete actions by the church to address the wrongs and how it could be righted-after all, that is what reconciliation is about. The Catholic church is wealthy and could certainly help with money and resources to provide needed services in counselling, cultural healing activities, education, revival of our languages and traditional laws, to name a few. An apology is a start."

Thanks is given for those who journeyed to Rome to seek the attention of the Pope and ask again for an apology. Their efforts are recognized and appreciated. How much stronger would that have been if there were throngs of First Nations people behind them on our own lands showing the Pope the widespread need for total acknowledgement of the role of the church,

colonization, destruction of our families and culture? Did the Pope fully understand how Deeply residential schools impeded the development of our people and governments?

When the Pope comes to Canada the NTC ask that he give us concrete actions that the church will take to go along with an apology to show real remorse and start to address the devastating damage the church has had and continues to have on generations of our people. Words cannot be enough.

Residential School Help line 1-800-721-0066

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