



Sacred Heart CHURCH OF THE FIRST PEOPLES

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Dear Parishioners and friends of Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples,

The discovery of the remains of two hundred and fifteen children buried in unmarked graves at the former Kamloops residential school reawakens our hurt, grief and anger at the injustice Indigenous people have suffered in Canada.

For those who survived residential schools and are related to survivors, this may trigger painful and traumatic memories, together with feelings of sadness, depression, and anger about what happened to your ancestors. For those who are not Indigenous but are settlers to Canada, this news may trigger guilt and shame, along with feelings of helplessness and frustration at how the early settlers violated the Indigenous peoples and separated families.

As members of the Catholic clergy and the Missionary Oblates, we feel deep sadness and shame at how some of our church ancestors became agents who implemented the government policies that traumatized and wounded Indigenous culture, communities, and families.

No matter what group you belong to, Indigenous or settler, how we respond to the bitter truth of the residential schools is the most important task of our generation. We all need to walk together along the path of healing, reconciliation and peace.

This process is not fast or easy. As pastors, Catholic clergy, and Missionary Oblates, we are committed to remaining in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples as we share together, and are healed by, the treasures of the Gospel and Christian faith.

Sincerely yours in Christ Jesus and Mary Immaculate,

Fr. Susai Jesu OMI

Fr. Mark Blom OMI

02 June 2021