



**Joint Statement of Commitment
of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate
(OMI Lacombe Canada and Notre-Dame-du-Cap)
on Documentation Transparency Regarding Residential Schools
June 24, 2021**

We are two Catholic religious communities of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (commonly known as the Oblates) and were involved in operating many of the residential schools throughout Canada. The Oblates operated 48 schools, including the Marieval Indian Residential School and the Kamloops Indian Residential School. We remain deeply sorry for our involvement in residential schools and the harms they brought to Indigenous peoples and communities.

We want to reiterate our commitment and intent to disclose all historical documents maintained by us and in our possession, in accordance with all legislation, about our involvement.

With today's disclosure of the 751 unmarked graves at the former Marieval Indian Residential School on the lands of the Cowessess First Nation, and the recent disclosure of the remains of 215 children at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School on the lands of Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc, we offer this formal commitment statement.

Consistent with the [Oblate Apology, given in 1991](#), our two Oblate religious communities ([OMI Lacombe Canada](#) and [Notre-Dame-du-Cap](#)) have worked to make our historical documents available through partnerships with universities, archives and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. While some progress has been made, this disclosure is not complete, and has been complicated by issues of provincial and national privacy laws.

We are not experts in the management and analysis of these historical documents or the complex privacy laws which apply. However, we must address these issues, as without a full review of the existing historical documentation from our order's involvement, the truth of residential schools will not be fully known. Recognising that we are not the appropriate organisations to determine which documents can be released within the law, we are seeking guidance and instruction from expert organisations. And we further acknowledge that delays can cause ongoing distrust,

distress, and trauma to Indigenous peoples across British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and the rest of the country.

For this reason, we declare that our commitment to transparency involves the following:

- We will disclose and not block access to the historical documents maintained by us and in our possession, as is possible within the law, to establish the truth of what happened in residential schools;
- We will seek guidance from and work with First Nations and federal and provincial governments on these matters;
- We will work with bishops and other leaders in the Catholic church to support full truth in these matters.



Fr. Ken Thorson, OMI
Provincial – OMI Lacombe Canada



Père Luc Tardif, OMI
Provincial – Notre-Dame-du-Cap

About the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate:

The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate were founded in 1816 by St. Eugene de Mazenod in Aix en Provence, France. The community arrived in Canada in 1841. After their arrival, Oblate priests and brothers worked across Canada and throughout the far north in a variety of areas including, residential schools, parish and retreat ministry, and hospital and prison chaplaincies. OMI Lacombe Canada Province is based in Ottawa, ON, and Notre-Dame-du-Cap Province is based in Richelieu QC.

Media contacts:

OMI Lacombe Canada Province : information@omilacombe.ca

Notre-Dame-du-Cap Province : provincial@omiquebec.com