



[Home](#) » [News](#)

Religious order that ran Kamloops Indian Residential School reaches out to Tk'emlups

Father Ken Thorson in an interview with KTW: "Clearly we were part of a system that long did significant amount of damage to First Nations communities in Kamloops and in so many other places across the country. And so we're trying to do what we can, along with others, to work towards reconciliation."

[Christopher Foulds](#) / Kamloops This Week

MAY 31, 2021 02:55 PM



OMI

The Missionary Oblates
of Mary Immaculate

The spokesperson for the religious order that ran the Kamloops Indian Residential School for decades said the group has reached out to Tk'emlups te Secwépemc Chief Rosanne Casimir to offer assistance and to express its sympathies following the discovery of the remains of 215 children on the grounds of the former school.

Father Ken Thorson is with the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, the religious congregation that administered the Kamloops residential school a few years after it opened in 1890 until 1969, when the federal government assumed control.

"I want people to know that the Oblates are going to do what we can to assist the band with their investigation," Thorson said, noting he had emailed Casimir on the weekend and will attempt to contact her again this week.

"And also, certainly, to express our sympathies. I mean, clearly we were part of a system that long did significant amount of damage to First Nations communities in Kamloops and in so many other places across the country. And so we're trying to do what we can, along with others, to work towards reconciliation."

While the Catholic Church as a whole has not apologized for its role in residential schools in Canada, the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate did offer an apology in 1991 and later paid out money in lawsuits and contributed to the \$3 billion in compensation given to 28,000 claimants who were residential school survivors.

Part of the apology from the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate reads:

"We apologize for the part we played in the cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious imperialism that was part of the mentality with which the peoples of Europe first met the aboriginal peoples and which consistently has lurked behind the way the Native peoples of Canada have been treated by civil governments and by the churches.

We were, naively, part of this mentality and were, in fact, often a key player in its implementation. We recognize that this mentality has, from the beginning, and ever since, continually threatened the cultural, linguistic, and religious traditions of the Native peoples. We recognize that many of the problems that beset Native communities today — high unemployment, alcoholism, family breakdown, domestic violence, spiralling suicide rates, lack of healthy self-esteem — are not so much the result of personal failure as they are the result of centuries of systemic imperialism."

Thorson said the records from the Kamloops Indian Residential School are with the Royal BC Museum, noting the Victoria museum had been in contact with the Secwépemc Museum at Tk'emlups regarding school records before the May 27 announcement regarding the remains of the children being found.

Thorson noted the Oblates have priests and brother across Canada.

"And so, there may be records elsewhere. We're looking into that right now," he said. "We are looking into that and whatever else we have related to the school. Of course, we would want to make that available to the investigation."

© 2021 Kamloops This Week

Help Us Help Kamloops. Support Local Media.

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, Kamloops This Week is now soliciting donations from readers. This program is designed to support our local journalism in a time where our advertisers are unable to due to their own economic constraints. Kamloops This Week has always been a free product and will continue to be free. This is a means for those who can afford to support local media to help ensure those who can't afford to can get access to trusted local information. You can make a one-time or a monthly donation of any amount and cancel at any time .

NEW: For every donation of \$25 or greater, we will offer a digital advertising package to the local non-profit group of your choice.

Click on <https://support.kamloopsthisweek.com> for more information or to make your donation.

Thank you in advance for your support.

