



Office of Chief and Council Government of Siksika Nation

August 11, 2021

Siksika Nation Chief and Council meet with Bishop William McGrattan and Delegation from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Calgary

Siksika Nation Chief and Council invited Bishop William McGrattan and Delegation from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Calgary to meet on August 9th, 2021 at Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park to establish ways to rectify the relationship between Siksika Nation and the Catholic Church who have a long-standing history together that includes Indian Residential Schools (IRS) as well as a devoted following comprised of Siksika Nation members.

“We want to work together as a Nation and we want to start the healing process but at the same time if we are going to have a real move forward with the Catholic Church, you need to have that acknowledgement across the entire Catholic Church.” expressed Chief Ouray Crowfoot.

The following priorities identified in the meeting included the demolition of the old rectory and convent in Siksika, the maintenance of Holy Trinity Church, historical records and research as well as supporting the healing and memorialization of Residential school survivors from Siksika. The meeting also addressed the upcoming IRS search for unmarked graves that will take place in Siksika and will include several locations including the site of St. Joseph Residential School Grounds.

Leadership also indicated that they do not condone the actions of those who attempted to set fire to two churches in Siksika this past June and highlighted the need for an improved relationship between the Nation and the Church as there are a number of Nation members who are devout members of various denominations including the Catholic and Anglican faith-based religions.

Bishop William McGrattan conveyed his gratitude for the invite and looks forward to working with Siksika on a new path moving forward, “I come with great hope. I believe that we need to begin locally and we need to start in small ways and this is the first reception and willingness of a First Nation in our Dioceses to meet and I think that is both courageous and I also see this as an opportunity to re-build trust and that takes a long time so these are small ways I hope during this meeting that we can begin to establish this path moving forward, to rectify, but more to improve the future, especially for young peoples and families and that is something that we should share together, not only as a church but as a country.”

The meeting also included Siksika Nation Councillors; Kendall Panther Bone, Tracy McHugh, Jenny Goodin and Wade Healy and a delegation from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Calgary that included Fr. Wilbert Chin Jon – Vicar General, Fr. Kevin Tumback – Vicar General, Alejandro



Office of Chief and Council Government of Siksika Nation

Henao, Carol Hollywood, Fr. Long Vu – Pastor, Deacon Roger Nelson, Maurice Running Rabbit – Parish Council and support staff. The meeting wrapped up with a tour of the site of St. Joseph Residential School Grounds and the Cemeteries at the St. Mary's Church Parish Hall in Siksika.