



**ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS
PRESS RELEASE/COMMUNIQUÉ
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**Assembly of First Nations finalizing preparations for delegation to visit with
Pope Francis at the Vatican in December 2021**

(Ottawa, ON) – The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is releasing today the details of its upcoming delegation to Vatican City in support of Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action #58. In collaboration with the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB), the AFN has confirmed plans for 13 delegates to gather with the Holy Father on December 20, 2021. The delegates will have the opportunity to speak to the Holy Father before joining with all Indigenous delegates to hear a response from His Holiness.

“We have called upon His Holiness to apologize to Survivors on our ancestral lands,” said NWT Regional Chief Norman Yakeleya, portfolio holder of Knowledge Keepers, Residential Schools and First Nations Veterans who will be leading the delegation. “It’s encouraging that the Holy See committed to that back in October. Now, our delegation can begin a dialogue about what that apology looks like. Our gathering in December is the next step in completing TRC Call to Action #58.”

The First Nations delegation will include 13 representatives from across Canada and will be announced shortly.

Identified to attend as well is Chief Wilton Littlechild as official delegation spokesperson, Fred Kelly, Spiritual Advisor and Phil Fontaine as Knowledge Keeper.

“I am calling on the church to make a number of reparations to First Nations and all Survivors,” said AFN National Chief RoseAnne Archibald. “The delegation is tasked with engaging His Holiness on meaningful dialogue to ensure reparations, including revoking the 1493 Papal Bull on the Doctrine of Discovery. I look forward to the outcome of this gathering and determining next steps.”

Further details of the delegation will continue to be made available through the AFN and CCCB websites.

*The AFN is the national organization representing First Nations citizens in Canada.
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