

February 8, 2016

His Holiness  
The Pope  
The Apostolic Palace  
00120 Vatican City  
Rome, Italy

Your Holiness:

**Re: Gonzaga School, Winnipeg, Canada**

We, the undersigned, are members of the Indigenous community in the low-income, largely Indigenous North End of Winnipeg, Canada. We are writing to you to respectfully request that you intervene to prevent the establishment of a Jesuit school, referred to as the Gonzaga school, in our community.

In late 2015, Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission released its report titled *Final Report, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*. The Report documents, in excruciating detail, the terrible damage done to Indigenous children and the families of Indigenous children who were forced into Canada's residential schools, fully one-half of which were run by the Catholic Church. So great was the damage that one of the "Calls to Action" issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to the Government of Canada is as follows:

We call upon the Pope to issue an apology to Survivors, their families, and communities for the Roman Catholic Church's role in the spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis children in Catholic-run residential schools (TRC 2015: 330).

Given the damage that has been over so many years to Indigenous children and their families, and given the great success achieved by our own Indigenous-run schools here in Winnipeg, we respectfully call upon your Holiness to intervene in such a way as to bring a halt to the Gonzaga School that we fear is about to be imposed upon us.

We thank Your Holiness for your attention to this important matter.

Respectfully:

James Favel

Larry Morrissette