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Raising Our Voices: A Statement from the Leadership of the Reformed Catholic Church in support of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and their Families

Violence and abuse affect women in every country and every walk of life. We are assaulted daily by social and news media accounts of the latest atrocities. Social scientists note that sexual discrimination, physical abuse, psychological or emotional abuse, sexual assault, rape, detention, isolation, control of money, shelter, time, food, etc., financial exploitation, trafficking, and other forms of abuse and violence against women respects neither race, ethnicity, culture, wealth, position, religious belief or age. Violence against women is rampant and is egregious. It is of particular concern with regard to Indigenous women. As people of faith, we are called and required to raise our voices in opposition to these crimes and in support of the victims and their families.

When First Nation peoples of Canada began calling attention to this plight in 2016, there were over 5,000 cases. Since that time the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's movement has spread across North America. Federal governments in both Canada and the United States have passed legislation addressing the issues.

Canada is engaging with Indigenous organizations through Its Time: Canada's Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence (GBV), to put forward actions to help address violence against Indigenous women and girls as well as LGBTQ and Two-Spirit People. The Government of Canada continues to invest in housing, education, and the transformative reform of child and family services with a focus on prevention, ensuring children are connected to their language and culture, and keeping families together.

In the United States, the Department of Justice is committed to fully implementing Public Law No. 116-165, Savanna's Act. Signed into law in October 2020, Savanna's Act was a bipartisan effort to improve the federal response to missing or murdered indigenous persons (MMIP), including by increasing coordination among Federal, State, Tribal, and local law enforcement agencies.

Yet the number of missing and murdered Indigenous women continues to be of concern, with over 4,000 unsolved cases at present.

Oglala Lakota holy man Black Elk (1863-1950) said, "It is not enough to have a vision. In order to have its power, you must enact your vision on earth for all to see. Only then do you have the power."

We call upon all members of the Reformed Catholic Church and all people of goodwill who share our vision of a more just and equitable society to raise their voices in support of Indigenous women. If you see something, say something. If you are speaking with your representatives at the local, state, or federal levels, inquire for an update on what the government is doing to solve these cases.

In addition, we invite you to join us in this prayer for all those who are missing or have been murdered, especially on February 14 – Women's Memorial March, and May 5 – National Day of Awareness for Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women/Persons:

***O God, the Great Spirit, who gives light and life to all creation, we place before you the plight of the Indigenous women and girls who are missing, trafficked, or murdered. We ask You to stir the hearts of all humanity to raise their voices in support of efforts to solve these cases. Be with the family members of those whose fate is unknown.
Amen.***

**Sincerely in Christ,
The Bishops and Board of Directors of the Reformed Catholic Church.**