



ERMINESKIN CREE NATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RESPONSE TO CATHOLIC CHURCH STATEMENT ON THE DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY (March 30 2023) Ermineskin Cree Nation – Treaty Six Territory.

The Roman Catholic Church issued a Joint Statement of the Dicasteries for Culture and Education and for Promoting Integral Human Development on the “Doctrine of Discovery”. The Church after extensive research has concluded that the Doctrine of Discovery is not valid. It cannot be used to “claim” our territories, lands and resources. The lands were not “terra nullius” but home and governed by the many nations whose inherent rights belong of these lands. As Treaty Peoples, “We have always maintained that our lands and resources remain in our Nations”. Moreover, we made a peace and friendship treaty with the British Crown - at the request of the Crown - to have her subjects live in peace within our territory. The state of Canada has used the doctrine of discovery to falsely assert underlying “crown” title to our lands. There is no underlying Crown title in our territories. The use of the Doctrine of Discovery by colonial powers historically was to undermine indigenous rights to lands and resources. As the joint statement from the Catholic Church points out: “The Church is also aware that the contents of these documents were manipulated for political purposes by competing colonial powers in order to justify immoral acts against indigenous peoples that were carried out, at times, without opposition from ecclesiastical authorities.” We cannot grant pardon but we can work towards a better future for all people. The state of Canada and the province should be rethinking all their work in relation to indigenous lands and resources. **“We consider our treaty to be the start. Canada and industry have been manipulating the agenda for too long – to the point that they wrongly believe that they have rights to our lands and resources. This needs to stop”. As Treaty Peoples, “We have never gone back on the treaty” said Chief Randy of Ermineskin Cree Nation.** Further, he added: “We did not make treaty with Canada – but with the Crown.”

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For more information:

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