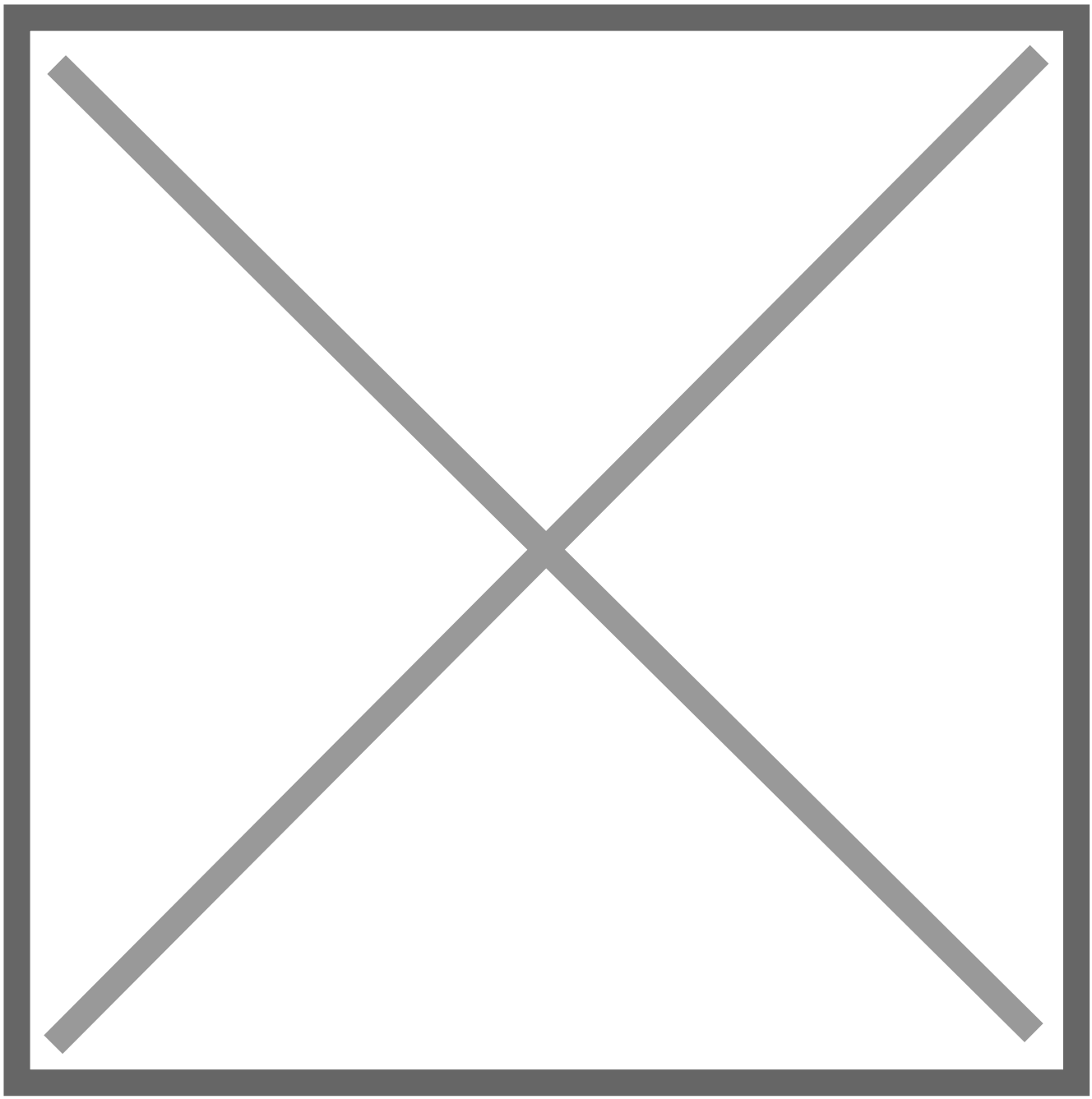
Vatican



Elder Fred Kelly, a spiritual adviser to the First Nations' delegation that met with Pope Francis, prays for the pope during a meeting with Indigenous elders, knowledge keepers, abuse survivors and youth from Canada, along with representatives of Canada's Catholic bishops in the Vatican's Clementine Hall April 1, 2022. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)



by Christopher White

Former Vatican Correspondent (2021-2025)

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

May 13, 2022

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

ROME — Pope Francis will make a much anticipated visit to Canada from July 24-30, where he is expected to issue an apology on Canadian soil for the Catholic Church's involvement in the country's abuse-ridden residential schools, fulfilling a long sought after request by the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The Vatican announced the visit in its daily bulletin on May 13 and said the pope would visit the cities of Edmonton, Québec and Iqaluit. A detailed schedule has yet to be released.

Speculation about the trip has swirled since Francis held a series of meetings with representatives of Canada's Indigenous community from March 28 - April 1 at the Vatican.

At the conclusion of the meetings, Francis issued an initial apology and pledged to visit Canada soon.

Advertisement

"For the deplorable conduct of members of the Catholic Church, I ask God's forgiveness," said Francis, who described the institutional abuses by church leaders

as "contrary to the Gospel of Jesus."

With those words, Francis fulfilled a request for a papal apology that comes after years of appeals from Canada's Indigenous community and even Prime Minister Justin Trudeau for the Catholic Church to seek forgiveness for its century-long involvement in the country's scandal plagued school system for Native children.

Francis' visit to the country — aimed at reconciling the Catholic Church with the country's Indigenous communities — will coincide with the Catholic feast day of St. Anne on July 26. Long considered a patron saint of grandparents, the feast day is also popular among some Indigenous Catholics known for their reverence of ancestors and the elderly.

In recent months, the 85-year-old pope has been sidelined by severe knee pain and is now appearing in a wheelchair at most public events.

Despite his limited mobility, the pope has vowed to press ahead with his commitments and is also scheduled to travel to the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan in early July.

This story appears in the **Pope Francis in Canada** feature series. View the full series.