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**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Publication of List of
Catholic-Operated U.S. Native Boarding Schools, pre-1978**

Mount St. Joseph, OH - Today, a list of Native boarding schools affiliated with the Catholic Church appears on a newly constructed website <http://ctah.archivistsacwr.org>. The list offers details about 87 Catholic-run Native boarding schools across 22 states. It includes the name(s) of each school, the location, the dates of operation, the Catholic diocese(s) in which it operated, the tribal nations impacted (as listed in historical documents), and the religious order(s) that ran and/or staffed each school. This list expands and corrects information available about Catholic-operated schools that appear on previous lists of Federal Indian Boarding Schools published by the Department of the Interior and by the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition. It also provides guidance on where archival material for each Catholic-operated school may be located.

A collaborative group of archivists, historians, concerned Catholics, and tribal members compiled and refined this resource to help facilitate access to information for survivors of Native boarding schools, their descendants, and Tribal Nations.

“While there are more steps for the Catholic Church to take to move toward truth, healing, and reconciliation, this list is a powerful step forward,” said Maka Black Elk, Executive Director for Truth and Healing at Red Cloud Indian School, who contributed to efforts to compile the list.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, the U.S. federal government funded or ran more than 400 Native residential schools, many of which were operated by Christian churches. The impact of these schools has been widely recognized, including by Pope Francis, as one of cultural genocide and intergenerational trauma.

Denise K. Lajimodiere, enrolled member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians and the originator of the first list of Native American Boarding Schools in the U.S., said of the list’s release, “This is certainly history making.”

Jaime Arsenault, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the White Earth Band of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and group member, called the list “a significant step toward truth-telling. Before there can be truth-telling, there must first be truth-finding. Basic information, such as how many Catholic-run Native American boarding schools operated in the United States and where they were located is critical information that must be known for the truth-telling and the reconciliatory process to take place.”

“This list has the potential to open lines of communication between Catholic archives and Tribal Nations,” she said.

On March 30, 2023, the Vatican formally repudiated the “Doctrine of Discovery,” historical Church documents which justified the seizure of land by colonial powers from Indigenous peoples. The U.S. Catholic Bishops endorsed this statement from the Vatican, writing, “We support the ongoing efforts of various Catholic communities to make archival and historical records more easily accessible.”

Subsequent editions of the list will be published annually to reflect new discoveries and any corrections that are submitted through the contact form on the list website.

All of the information in this list came from publicly available resources, including the Marquette University Guide to Catholic Records about Native Americans in the United States, official Catholic directories and Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Extensive effort was made to communicate directly with the religious communities or dioceses who appear on the list, many of whom offered confirmation or correction to the information.

For further information about the list and its creation:

Website: <http://ctah.archivistsacwr.org>

FAQ: <https://ctah.archivistsacwr.org/frequently-asked-questions/>

Introduction: <https://ctah.archivistsacwr.org/introduction/>

Contacts for Follow-Up Interviews

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- Dr. Denise K. Lajimodiere, enrolled member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians, co-founder and former board president of the National Native

American Boarding School Healing Coalition, author of *Stringing Rosaries: The History, the Unforgivable, and the Healing of Northern Plains American Indian Boarding School Survivors*, and **the originator of the first-ever list of Native American Boarding Schools**, dlajimodiern@gmail.com

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