

**STATEMENT OF THE JESUITS IN ENGLISH AND FRENCH CANADA, FOLLOWING THE TRIALS IN THE TRAGIC DEATHS OF TINA FONTAINE AND COLTEN BOUSHIE <sup>i</sup>**

**Montreal, March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2018**

The tragic deaths of Tina Fontaine and Colten Boushie and the recent trials of those accused of their murders have caused untold pain to their families, friends and communities. We acknowledge this pain and share it with our sisters and brothers of the First Nations.

The verdicts of ‘not-guilty’ in both cases have received strong reactions across Canada. They highlight glaring examples of the deep challenges of prejudice, discrimination and marginalization faced by Indigenous peoples in our country. As John Meehan SJ, president of Campion College in Regina stated: “Today, many reexamine the impact of race and social inequality on our justice system.”

On behalf of the Jesuits of English and French Canada, we wish to express our solidarity with First Nations across the country – especially with the Indigenous women and young people who are rising up against injustice. We offer our heartfelt sympathy to the families, friends and communities of Ms. Fontaine and Mr. Boushie.

As the Truth and Reconciliation Commission process has taught us, we believe that an authentic reconciliation is not possible without real justice. The first step towards establishing just relations between First Nations and Non-Indigenous Canadians is the recognition of the perverse effect of colonialism that remains hidden but active inside our social, legal, political and religious institutions.

In memory of Tina Fontaine, Colten Boushie and too many other victims, we are called to heal this deep crisis of confidence in a justice system that persistently seems to fail to protect and guarantee fair treatment of Indigenous people.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Bisson SJ". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

**Peter Bisson SJ**

Provincial of the Jesuits in English Canada

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Erik Oland SJ". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

**Erik Oland SJ**

Provincial of the Jesuits of French Canada and Haiti

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<sup>i</sup> Tina Fontaine (1999-2014) was an Anishinaabe girl living in Manitoba who was murdered in August 2014. The suspect in this case was acquitted by a jury on February 22 2018. Colten Boushie (1993-2016) was a Cree young man living in Saskatchewan who was shot dead in August 2016. His murderer was acquitted by a jury on February 9 2018.