



*Tsi Nahò:ten Karihwanákere Nó:nen'k*

# PRESS RELEASE

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## Ratitsénhaienhs to engage with community on Leon Lajoie issue

For immediate release

**(Kahnawake – 4, Kentenhkó:wa/November 2021)** The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke (MCK) wishes to announce that the Kahnawà:ke Ratitsénhaienhs are gauging the opinions of community members by inviting them to share their concerns and feedback on the issue regarding the remains of Father Leon Lajoie. Father Lajoie was a priest and, later, the long-time pastor for the St. Francis Xavier Mission in Kahnawà:ke, who retired in the mid-1990s and passed away in 1999. He was buried on the Territory after a request from representatives of the Catholic Church on behalf of the family of the deceased was received by the MCK and granted at that time.

More recently, with allegations being made by individuals, as well as the discovery of remains of Indigenous children from residential schools, we are aware that some community members want the issue of Father Lajoie's remains being on the Territory revisited. The MCK has been meeting with various community members and groups (including the community group who have been sitting outside the church on Sundays, the Church Administration Committee, and the Jesuit Order of Canada) and have been made aware of their opinions. As this is an issue that affects the entire community, the MCK is now moving forward with the engagement of the broader community.

These engagement sessions for Kahnawà:ke will be held at the Kahnawake Moose Lodge (upstairs) on the following dates:

- Tuesday, November 9 from 6pm-9pm
- Saturday, November 13 from 11am-2pm

In the interests of transparency and in order to assist in these discussions, the MCK has made a timeline of events available which details the issue from the date of the original decision to present day. The timeline is available online at [www.kahnawake.com/timeline](http://www.kahnawake.com/timeline).