

Update from the Archbishop

Dear People of the Archdiocese of St. John's:

Further to my previous messages, I wish to provide you with an update with respect to how the Archdiocese is actively working to address the claims of abuse at the Mount Cashel Orphanage in the 1940s, 50s and 60s, for which the Newfoundland and Labrador Court of Appeal has held us vicariously liable.

First I wish to thank the over 1900 people of the Archdiocese who responded to the survey that was sent out in June. I am pleased that so many of you took the time to provide input on what is a very challenging process for us all. We are currently reviewing your responses and will do everything we can to include your feedback into our planning.

One point that was clear from an early review of the survey results is the desire of parishioners to continue to receive communications and information from the Archdiocese regarding the work being done to address the settlement claims. This update and those issued previously are attempts to provide that information as it becomes available. The evaluation of both the amounts owing to the claimants and the value of our Archdiocesan assets are detailed processes which are still ongoing and being handled carefully and with due diligence.

As part of our communication and planning processes, we have been seeking input from many committees as well as from our Archdiocesan Finance and Presbyteral Councils. In addition, I have personally been meeting with parish Pastoral and Finance Councils and I have been visiting parishes to preside and preach at the weekend Masses. The information and input that I am receiving from these meetings and visits has been valuable and is greatly appreciated.

We are now beginning a major appraisal process to determine the sale value of all the significant real estate properties and buildings of the Archdiocese. While the real estate assessment stage is still ongoing, we can report that certain properties will be placed on the market for sale. Currently the Archdiocese has two parcels of vacant land for sale and in the coming weeks, the Archbishop's residence in Outer Cove and the Mount St. Francis property on Merrymeeting Road will be advertised for sale. These properties are the first of many that will be listed for sale in the upcoming weeks and months. As much as is possible, we will try to keep you informed about this property appraisal and sale process.

As we have indicated, the Archdiocese will be undergoing a major restructuring that will result in significant changes. There will be impacts to our buildings, our services and our staff. As we go through this restructuring, it is important that we never forget that as a Catholic community, we are called to provide an environment of compassion to victims who have experienced abuse and to do all we can to bring healing to the victims, their loved ones and the entire community of faith. We must continue to work together to build a just and loving faith community, trusting that Jesus Christ will be with us to guide us in the challenges that we face.

Again, I ask that you please join with me in praying for God's guidance, healing for the victims, and understanding, compassion and patience for us all.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Peter Hundt
Archbishop of St. John's,