

Message of the Archbishop to be read after the Prayer after Communion at all the weekend Masses of December 2-3, 2023, and to be posted on parish websites following the weekend Masses.

Message from the Archbishop

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

I write today to keep you informed of the ongoing insolvency proceedings of the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's ("RCECSJ"). The Archdiocese is continuing to work closely with our legal counsel, the court appointed Monitor, and representative counsel for the claimants to offer what we can to the past victims of sexual abuse and to secure a path forward for our Catholic communities.

On Friday, December 1st, the court appointed Monitor submitted a report to the court regarding the status of the proceedings. The report includes an update on RCECSJ property sales, settlement proceedings with the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in relation to school properties, insurance recovery proceedings, and an overview of the claims filed pursuant to the court approved claims process.

The Monitor's report included information on the funds that have been raised by the RCECSJ to address its liabilities including compensation properly payable to victims of sexual abuse. Much of these funds have been raised through fair market sales of RCECSJ properties.

The Monitor also reported that he has received 369 claim submissions filed against the RCECSJ. These claims are currently being evaluated by independent Claims Officers who will provide both a determination of liability and a value for each claim. At this time, the Monitor does not know the total value of claim awards against the RCECSJ but anticipates that the Claims Officers' decisions will be communicated in April of 2024.

I know that the ongoing legal proceedings and the sale of church properties have been a great source of hurt and pain for the communities, parishes, and individuals of this Archdiocese. I am very grateful to all the clergy and parishioners who have provided support and assistance to each other and to the broader Catholic community during this difficult time of change and restructuring.

As part of the restructuring process, the Archdiocese and the parishes are now operating under a new legal entity separate from the RCECSJ. Similarly, church buildings bought from the RCECSJ for continued pastoral use are now the property of other separate legal entities. As separate legal entities, they will not be impacted by the financial award determinations made within the RCECSJ claims process.

This weekend we begin the season of Advent and the beginning of a new liturgical year. Please join me in asking God to help us to "prepare the way of the Lord" by continuing to do our part to bring healing, reconciliation, and peace to our Archdiocese and to the world.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Peter Hundt
Archbishop of St. John's