

Message for the Archbishop to be read after the Prayer after Communion at all weekend Masses March 5th and 6th 2022, and to be posted on parish websites following the weekend Masses.

Update from the Archbishop

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

Over the last two weeks, there have been a number of reports in the media regarding the closure of parishes, an agreement between St. Kevin's Parish and the Representative Counsel for the victims of sexual abuse, the possible sale of parish cemeteries and the list of church properties for sale.

I have been informed by several parish communities, including Holy Family in Paradise and St. Edward's in Kelligrews, that at the present time they do not have the financial resources necessary to continue in operation. These parish churches have been closed, at least temporarily and pastoral ministry for their parishioners is being provided through neighbouring parishes while parish representatives work together to plan for the future pastoral ministry of the area.

Last Sunday representatives from St. Kevin's Parish reached a settlement agreement with the Representative Counsel for the majority of claimants. The Archdiocese took no position with respect to this proposed settlement and was not involved with the negotiations. The Archdiocese had proposed to seek direction from the Court regarding this matter but as it is now settled, such direction is no longer required. There are still details to be considered as to how this settlement will relate to the relationship of St. Kevin's Parish to the Archdiocese.

On March 4th the Court approved a sale by tender process for the major church properties in the greater St. John's area, including the Basilica and some cemeteries. This is consistent with the information we provided to the parish pastoral and finance councils in January. Since that time, many of these parish councils and/or parish steering committees have been actively working with each other and the Archdiocese to discern how best to prepare for and provide pastoral ministry to their area. Many are contemplating proposals for the "repurchase" of certain church buildings and properties. Likewise, the Archdiocese will be working with the Catholic Cemeteries Committee in considering a tender proposal for the "repurchase" of cemetery properties.

We recognize that there is great concern among the Catholic people of the Archdiocese regarding the future of our parish churches and Catholic cemeteries. The Archdiocese is aware of this concern and is actively working with parishes and interested groups to discern how best to ensure that the practise and celebration of our Catholic Faith continues within the Archdiocese.

At the start of a message to the St. Edward's Parishioners published in last week's bulletin, the author wrote: ***This last weekend of worship in the St. Edward's Church and parish matches a Lenten pause before Easter. Consider the bible story and how it relates to us. Jesus was isolated and alone in the wilderness for 40 days and nights. He fasted. He was challenged by negative forces of the world and he overcame them, staying true to God's word and denying the material. How transformative was that experience for Him? Can we be transformed by our struggles?***

I ask that you please join with me in praying for God's inspiration, guidance and peace as we begin this liturgical season of Lent and as we continue this "lenten journey" through the wilderness of restructuring, property sales and creditor protection. I remain,

Yours in Christ,
+Peter Hundt
Archbishop of St. John's