

Nfld. & Labrador

## All archdiocese properties, including Basilica, being appraised for Mount Cashel compensation

Work to appraise assets won't be done until early 2022, archbishop says

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The Archdiocese of St. John's says about 130 victim claims have been filed related to the former Mount Cashel Orphanage. (CBC)

The Archdiocese of St. John's says it is continuing to work with survivors and assess the values of its properties to compensate men who were sexually abused at the former Mount Cashel Orphanage.

In a letter read during masses on Saturday and Sunday, Archbishop Peter Hundt said the work is a complex and sensitive process that now includes about 130 claims.

"There may be more victim claims coming forward and so we do not currently know what the final number of value of these claims will be," Hundt said in the letter.

"This is a major piece of information that we will need to have before we can effectively determine how to bring resolution to all the claims."

- [Catholic Church selling assets to pay Mount Cashel survivors, but lawyer says it won't be enough](#)
- [Archdiocese of St. John's to sell church properties to pay Mount Cashel victims](#)

In 2018, the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador ruled the Archdiocese of St. John's was not liable for abuse at the orphanage, but a subsequent appeal by the victims overturned that decision in July 2020.

The archdiocese then applied for its own appeal, which was rejected by the Supreme Court of Canada in January, ending a painstaking 21-year process for victims who were abused at the orphanage when they were children.

Following the Supreme Court of Canada's decision, lawyers for the victims said more victims could come forward and seek compensation following the ruling.

## Basilica among properties being assessed

Hundt said the archdiocese is continuing an analysis of all its assets — even Basilica of St. John the Baptist — to determine their value, a process that he expects won't be completed until early next year.

"The value and the sustainability of all our buildings and properties, including the Basilica, is being considered. However, this process will take several more months to complete, as it is a major undertaking that involves a great deal of research," he said.



The Basilica of St. John the Baptist is among the properties that is being assessed to potentially be sold to compensate victims. (Heather Barrett/CBC)

The archdiocese announced in July that it would be selling some well-known properties, including the archbishop's residence in Outer Cove and the Mount St. Francis property on Merrymeeting Road, along with two parcels of vacant land.



It's unclear what the compensation for each victim could be, but the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in January awarded four test cases \$2.6 million, an average of \$650,000 per case.

The Archdiocese of St. John's did not agree to an interview, but in an email to CBC News on Sunday, the archbishop's office said it will provide further information as it becomes available.



Lawyer Geoff Budden says that other victims of abuse at Mount Cashel may still come forward. (Adam Walsh/CBC)

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Geoff Budden, a lawyer whose firm represents at least 70 survivors of abuse at Mount Cashel, says while it is reasonable that the archdiocese would need time to evaluate its assets, that process shouldn't result in any unnecessary delays in compensating victims.

"Many of the survivors are quite old and none of them are young," Budden said. "And this litigation has been going on for a very long time."

The potential sale of the Basilica didn't come as a surprise to Budden.

"They have to look at all the assets," he said. "Everything has to be on the table."

Budden added that, as expected, more victims have come forward since the Supreme Court of Canada decision.

"And unfortunately, what they had to say was quite familiar to us, sometimes the same perpetrators as we've heard before," Budden said.

"I'm sure that others may yet come forward."