

Nfld. & Labrador

Deal will see Mount Cashel abuse survivors and St. John's parish get share of Chase the Ace cash

St. Kevin's to retain church and hall as part of out-of-court settlement

[Terry Roberts and Rob Antle](#) · CBC News · Posted: Feb 28, 2022 5:29 PM NT | Last Updated: February 28



Thousands of people were drawn to St. Kevin's Parish in the Goulds neighbourhood of St. John's in the summer of 2017 for its weekly drawing of the card in the Chase the Ace fundraiser. (CBC)

WARNING: This article may be distressing for those who have experienced sexual violence or know someone affected by it.

A settlement has been reached involving millions of dollars raised in a Chase the Ace fundraiser for a St. John's-area parish nearly five years ago.

The cash got tangled up in ongoing insolvency proceedings involving the Roman Catholic church in eastern Newfoundland and efforts to compensate victims of historic abuse at the Mount Cashel orphanage.

An out-of-court settlement was reached Sunday night. The matter had been due to go before a Newfoundland and Labrador Supreme Court judge Monday morning.

"It's a result we're pleased with, and the parish council, it's a result I understand that they are satisfied with," said Geoff Budden, a St. John's lawyer who represents 70 people who suffered abuse at Mount Cashel.

"So it's a compromise, but it is one that will see a significant sum of money put forward to be used to compensate the survivors."

Budden said there will be a sealing order to cloak the exact breakdown of the fund distribution from the Chase the Ace pot.





Geoff Budden represents 70 survivors of abuse at the Mount Cashel orphanage in St. John's. (Adam Walsh/CBC)

The fundraiser sparked Canada-wide media coverage during the summer of 2017. Thousands of people descended on the Goulds neighbourhood of St. John's each week to see the latest card drawn.

It raised millions for St. Kevin's Parish — money earmarked for parish upgrades and community support programs.

Last year, the courts finally settled a long legal battle by ruling that the archdiocese was vicariously liable for abuses suffered at the former Mount Cashel orphanage.

The Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's entered insolvency proceedings, and is liquidating churches, parish halls and other assets to compensate Mount Cashel survivors.

The archdiocese sought direction from a judge on whether \$5.5 million in Chase the Ace cash would be put in the pot made available to creditors.

Meanwhile, St. Kevin's took the position that the funds must be used for purposes set out in its lottery licence application.

Now, the agreement-in-principle reached out of court will see both sides benefit.

According to the lawyer for the parish, Kyle Rees, a new corporate entity will hold the ownership of the church and parish hall, plus the parish's share of the Chase the Ace cash.

He indicated that the millions of dollars raised were targeted to benefit the local community.

"In our view, the settlement we've negotiated is one that allows that to continue to happen, and allows the church to continue its important community work," Rees said.

He said St. Kevin's will become the first Catholic church in the province to fully own itself, and be owned by the members of its community.



Kyle Rees is the lawyer for St. Kevin's Parish. (Terry Roberts/CBC)

The deal must still be approved by a judge.

Meanwhile, court proceedings remain ongoing as the episcopal corporation works to address liabilities related to historic sexual abuse cases, dating back to the 1940s and 1950s.

Church properties — including the landmark Basilica of St. John the Baptist in St. John's — could potentially be sold off, as part of that process.

It's possible some of them could ultimately remain affiliated with the church, if parishioners step up and open their wallets.

Archbishop Peter Hundt noted in an email that an update will be provided to parishes in the coming days.

"We cannot add anything further until that time," Hundt wrote.

Support is available for anyone who has been sexually assaulted. You can access crisis lines and local support services through this [Government of Canada website](#) or the [Ending Violence Association of Canada database](#). If you're in immediate danger or fear for your safety or that of others around you, please call 911.

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