



DIOCESE OF SAINT JOHN

1 Bayard Drive
Saint John, NB E2L 3L5
Canada
Tel (506) 653-6800 • Fax (506) 653-6859

Office of the Bishop

May 12, 2022

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

These last two and a half years have helped me gain an understanding of the vital need the Cathedral, our mother church, fulfills in our diocese, in the City of Saint John and beyond. The Cathedral is important, not only for its heritage value but also for the missionary outreach and spiritual revitalization it provides in an area of the diocese that desperately needs a Catholic Christian presence. We are not just restoring a building but restoring hearts and souls to Jesus.

Our parishes need to be invitational, where people are invited to enter into that life-changing relationship with Jesus and then go deeper, responding to their baptismal call to be disciples, are nourished, educated in the faith, and equipped as leaders, and then are commissioned for outreach. Over the last two years, despite the difficulties of the pandemic, the Cathedral community has been reaching out through our St. Vincent de Paul ministry and other lay-led initiatives such as a parish nursing program and Pizza and Prayer serving the marginalized and the poor. We have been providing opportunities for people to encounter Jesus through daily Mass and Adoration, and a recent Lenten Revitalization Series, just to name a few. During the month of May two Marian pilgrimages will be hosted at the Cathedral promoting devotion to Our Lady, to whom I have entrusted this restoration effort.

The Cathedral restoration will be completed in five phases. The first phase which addressed the roof was completed in 2016 at a cost of \$1.5 million, while the second phase addressing the ceiling and the main exterior door has just recently been completed at an approximate cost of \$1.5 million. We now turn our efforts to the remaining phases which will tackle the bell tower, the masonry and windows, foundation and asphalt repair and interior painting and upgrades. Being good stewards of such an important place of worship not only ensures a place for those seeking Christ today, but also honours our ancestors who invested heavily in building both the Cathedral and the faith of the diocese. Our place in history is a testimony to the countless faithful who have gone before us, and a sign of hope for future generations.

A vibrant Cathedral contributes to building a vibrant diocese. To support parishes in their evangelization efforts, 10% of every dollar raised will be used to establish a diocesan endowment fund to serve youth, seniors, religious education and leadership formation needs in the parishes of the diocese. This will enable the entire diocese to continue the important mission of the Church, spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the peripheries in a world in such desperate need of the hope that he promises. This is how we become a vibrant, revitalized, renewed Church.

To aid in this Cathedral restoration effort, an annual collection will be taken up in the parishes on the weekend of the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi), this year on June 18-19, 2022. I am asking you to prayerfully consider a generous personal donation towards this campaign. Gifts of either a one-time donation, multi-year pledge, securities, bequests or life insurance are a tremendous blessing and will aid significantly in the success of this campaign. This will be a multi-year process but God-willing, the good fruits of this effort will bless our diocese for generations to come.

I am counting on your fervent prayer for this restoration campaign through the intercession of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, as we give God permission to move powerfully in our diocese.

Please be assured of my prayers for you and the particular needs of your parish communities.

United in prayer and mission,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christian Riesbeck". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

✠ Christian Riesbeck, CC
Bishop of Saint John

Enclosure