



DIOCESE OF SAINT JOHN

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Office of the Bishop

May 25, 2026

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

In this Jubilee Year dedicated to St. Francis, we remain ever mindful of the Lord's words to this beloved Saint – "Rebuild my Church."

Over the past year we have witnessed strong spiritual growth and renewal at our mother church. The 2026 Jubilee Year, *Pilgrims of Hope*, brought thousands to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception for First Saturday Masses and devotions, including pilgrimages from all 26 parishes as well as youth, young adults, and lay movements. The 2026 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity gathered hundreds for communal worship. We have seen record participation in English and Spanish catechism classes, expanding family catechesis, and increased involvement in Alpha, Beta, RCIA, and Confirmation. More people are embracing stewardship, generously offering time, talent, and treasure. As people encounter Jesus, they serve actively in ministries of hospitality, outreach, prayer, and formation. Many are nourished daily through the Sacraments and experience Christ's healing power, while thousands of people have been served through our Saint Vincent de Paul outreach. We remain joyful and hopeful as the Holy Spirit continues to move powerfully in our Cathedral community.

At the same time, we know our Cathedral has physical needs that must be addressed to sustain this missionary work. With the two-year tower stabilization completed under the direction of Heritage Standing Inc. (HSI), we now turn to long-term masonry repairs in the northeast corner, guided by detailed stone-by-stone planning, with ongoing structural monitoring and testing alongside University partners. In 2025, HSI and the Cathedral received the Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals Award of Excellence in Conservation Engineering, a recognition that bodes well for future stewardship. I am also pleased to share that a new Cathedral Heritage Foundation Board of Directors composed of passionate local leaders has been assembled and is discerning next steps toward a campaign to raise essential funds for future work with enthusiasm and zeal—stay tuned!

To help support this important work, our annual Cathedral Restoration Collection will be taken on the weekend of Corpus Christi, June 6-7, 2026. Use the envelopes in your box sets, white envelopes marked "Cathedral Restoration," or visit <https://dioceseofsaintjohn.org/donations> to give by cheque (payable to "Cathedral Heritage Foundation"), e-transfer, or credit card (one-time or recurring). Bequests, securities, and other planned gifts are deeply appreciated and greatly support this vital work. For questions, contact reception@dioceseofsaintjohn.org or 506-653-6800.

I am counting on your fervent prayer for the Cathedral's physical restoration and for the Jubilee grace of spiritual renewal for the hearts and souls of all in the Diocese of Saint John.

United in prayer and mission, through the intercession of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception,

✠ Christian Riesbeck, CC
Bishop of Saint John