



COMMUNIQUÉ:

External Review by Honourable Pepita G. Capriolo

Laicization of Brian Boucher

Montreal, October 23, 2020 – The Honourable Pepita G. Capriolo has concluded her diocesan-commissioned review of how complaints about former priest Brian Boucher were processed, focusing specifically on “who knew what, when” regarding instances of sexual and other forms of abuse.

Archbishop Christian Lépine expresses his sincere appreciation to the retired Quebec Superior Court judge for completing this demanding task, despite the challenges imposed by the pandemic. M^e Capriolo presented the English version of the findings to the Archbishop on September 2; the French-language version will be completed soon.

The Archbishop and his team have been reviewing the findings and studying the recommendations in preparation for their public release by the end of November.

M^e Capriolo was mandated to conduct the external investigation in November 2019, following the untimely death of retired judge Anne-Marie Trahan four months earlier.

At the time of her death, Ms. Trahan had a threefold mandate: one, to conduct, on behalf of several dioceses, a 70-year statistical audit of diocesan records compiling the number of allegations of sexual abuse against clergy regarding minors; two, to conduct an external investigation for the Archdiocese of Montreal regarding the Brian Boucher dossier and three, to assess the quality and condition of the archives of the Archdiocese of Montreal.

M^e Capriolo’s investigation focused on both the Boucher dossier and the organization of the diocesan archives.

Like many organizations, one of the adverse effects of life during a pandemic is its negative impact on timelines. Nevertheless, once the Capriolo Report has been released publicly, the 70-year external audit is on the list of priorities to be addressed.

DIOCESAN PRIEST LAICIZED

In a related development, Archbishop Christian Lépine has dismissed Brian Boucher from the clerical state. The decision was rendered last year at the conclusion of a Church judicial process; however, the decision was subject to appeal.

This summer, the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith informed Archbishop Lépine that no appeal has been filed; therefore, the decision stands. Mr. Boucher is no longer a priest of the Roman Catholic Church.



Mr. Boucher cannot exercise any form of priestly function or occupy any office reserved for clerics. Moreover, he is prohibited from teaching in Catholic schools and institutions, or from exercising public functions such as lector or Eucharistic minister in a parish community.

Ordained in 1996, Mr. Boucher was convicted in criminal court in January 2019 and sentenced to a prison term on March 25, 2019 for having sexually assaulted two minors while serving as a priest.

The Archdiocese of Montreal had removed Mr. Boucher's priestly faculties in December 2015 after learning of alleged impropriety, precipitating a Church (canonical) inquiry. In October 2016, a canonical administrative trial commenced, for which the Vatican appointed Archbishop Lépine as judge, with authority to render a definitive verdict and sentence.

During the same period, representatives of the Archdiocese took a lead role in the process that resulted in Mr. Boucher's arrest and lauded the courage of the victims. The Archdiocese co-operated fully with the ensuing police investigation and prosecution.

"We are of one heart with the victims, their families, their parish communities in their pain and suffering," the Archbishop reiterated. "We will never accept that such crimes be committed and remain concealed."

Following the filing of criminal charges in March 2017, the Archdiocese temporarily suspended the Church judicial process, a practice usually undertaken when a related civil or criminal proceeding occurs concurrently.

The canonical process resumed February 22, 2019, once the criminal trial had concluded. Archbishop Lépine delivered his verdict 11 days later, imposing the harshest penalty for a cleric: laicization.

The Archdiocese is reserving comment on the findings of the Honourable Pepita G. Capriolo and related matters until the report is released next month.

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Information:

Erika Jacinto
Press secretary, Archbishop's office
Director of Communications and Media Relations
Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Montreal
ejacinto@diocesemontreal.org