



PRESS RELEASE

Guilty verdict rendered: Fr. Brian Boucher

Montreal, January 8, 2019 – From the moment diocesan priest Brian Boucher was arraigned on sexual-interference/assault charges, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Montreal removed him from all ministry, expressed full confidence in the judicial process and has refrained, up to now, from issuing any comment out of respect for due process.

The guilty verdict delivered by Justice Compagnone today is a result of due process, and the Archdiocese unequivocally acknowledges and identifies with the range of strong emotions and reactions the verdict evokes. It impacts the whole Archdiocese of Montreal, particularly the two complainants, their families and parish communities.

For many different reasons, the verdict arouses a gamut of feelings among both parishioners in the pew and Church leadership, including bishops and priests: feelings of shame, revulsion and anger as well as confusion, sadness and compassion.

The Archdiocese acknowledges the courage of those who met with diocesan authorities to report what they had experienced, which led to the court proceedings underway.

We are all deeply affected by the turmoil experienced by victims of sexual abuse at the hands of some members of the Catholic clergy during past decades whether here in Canada or elsewhere.

For its part, the Archdiocese of Montreal wants to underline for Catholics and the general public that complaints regarding all forms of abuse, such as the two filed against Fr. Boucher, are treated very seriously. Furthermore, protocols are in place to receive and deal with all abuse complaints.

Regarding certain complaints involving Fr. Boucher, both the Archdiocese and the SPVM acknowledged in separate press releases, issued March 2, 2017, that the Archdiocese, along with conducting an internal investigation, had accompanied the complainants with whom it was in contact and had collaborated extensively with the police before charges were laid.

The Archdiocese is providing pastoral care to some of those directly affected by today's verdict and has maintained close contact with the pastor and leadership team at the last parish at which Fr. Boucher had served, Our Lady of the Annunciation, where he was pastor from 2005 until 2014.

For some time now, a safe-environment policy has been in various stages of implementation throughout the diocese. Policy development began in 2011; a pilot project was ready to be launched in June 2016. Since June 2018, all parishes and diocesan services are now required to begin a process of implementation. The policy is consistent with the national guidelines for the protection of minors that were issued by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops in

October.

Although one verdict has been rendered, court proceedings regarding Fr. Boucher are still underway, and therefore, with full confidence in the criminal judicial process, the Archdiocese will not be issuing any further comment at this time.

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