



DIOCÈSE DE HEARST-MOOSONEE DIOCESE

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COMMUNIQUE CRIMINAL CHARGES

Charges have been laid by police against Fathers Rémi Lessard and Hervé Sauvé as well as two other persons following a long investigation into allegations of fraud and breach of trust perpetrated in the St. Patrick parishes of Kapuskasing as well as La Transfiguration of Cochrane. As the head of the diocese, I am saddened by all these events and the consequences for our faithful.

Following complaints, anomalies had been identified in these parishes and a team of lawyers along with agents of the insurance company advised the diocese of the risks of such a situation. It was therefore for the sake of transparency and to shed light on this case that an external audit of the financial records of parishes was requested in November 2018 and January 2019 done by the firm BDO. They confirmed that there were indeed amounts of money that had been raised and sent out of the country and that had not been reported to Revenue Canada. Transactions were apparently carried out without respecting some of the regulations and laws that govern parishes and dioceses as well as Canadian law. It is for this reason that the authorities were notified.

Any attempt to conceal these facts could backfire on the diocese and the bishop could be accused of complicity with the possibility of jeopardizing the status of the diocese as a charitable organization. In recent years, Revenue Canada has been examining more closely the financial activities of Canadian religious organizations and their compliance with the regulations and laws that govern them.

I invite you to pray with me for all those affected by these events.

+ Robert Bourgon
Bishop of Hearst-Moosonee

