



Archdiocese  
of Vancouver

JOHN PAUL II PASTORAL CENTRE

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## COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

# Catholic Archdiocese bids adieu to downtown Vancouver

*After decades in renovated warehouse, offices moving to green-certified building*

VANCOUVER (Feb. 19, 2015) – After nearly 60 years in the downtown core, the Archdiocese of Vancouver is moving its administrative offices to the 33<sup>rd</sup> and Willow area on the site of a “Campus of Care” being developed by Providence Health Care.



The administrative headquarters of the Catholic Church in the Lower Mainland, along with more than 100 full- and part-time employees and the many ministries and services such as the Catholic independent school board, Service and Justice, B.C. Catholic newspaper and Youth Ministry, will take up residence in the new John Paul II Pastoral Centre on Monday, March 2. The just-completed four-storey building is on

a newly named Saint John Paul II Way, southeast of B.C. Children’s and Women’s Hospital.

The former St. Vincent’s Hospital stood on the site for 65 years until it was closed in 2004, its health services relocated to other sites run by Providence Health Care, one of the largest faith-based health-care organizations in Canada.

The Archdiocese has occupied its present Yaletown location, 150 Robson St., since 1958, when it moved into a converted warehouse formerly owned by Northern Electric Co.

Archdiocesan officials said the current building, built in the 1920s, was no longer suitable for use as administrative headquarters for the Archdiocese. In addition to needing a great deal of maintenance, repairs and upgrades, its original warehouse design meant space was inefficiently utilized. Parking in the area also frequently posed a challenge.

Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB, said the current structure had out-served its purpose and it was time to find a long-term home elsewhere in Vancouver. “It is important that the Church’s administrative offices remain centrally located in Vancouver, but the existing building can no longer adequately serve the needs of the community or the Archdiocese,” said the Archbishop.



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The new pastoral centre is more central geographically to the rest of the Archdiocese of Vancouver, which has more than 120 churches and schools extending as far east as Hope. In addition to being purpose-built as an office building, it is handicap accessible, something the old building lacked.

The building will also be environmentally friendly and linked to the City of Vancouver's district energy system, said Archbishop Miller.

"We consciously chose to seek Gold certification under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system in order to be as environmentally responsible as we could and practice good stewardship in how we use our resources," Archbishop Miller said.

The cost of the new pastoral centre is about \$25 million, largely paid for through the sale of the old building to Amacon, a Vancouver real estate developer. No plans have been announced for the old pastoral centre, a designated heritage building.

The project also includes nine living residences for retired priests. With 17 retired priests, the Archdiocese has long sought ways to assist them in their retirement years. The residences were paid for by donations and other monies.

The Catholic Charities Men's Hostel on the third floor will continue to operate at the Robson Street location until a new home is found. One of the conditions of the sale of the old building was that the purchaser provide a new hostel with the same square footage as the existing one on a new site in the same neighbourhood.

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