





PROVINCIAL OFFICE ✦ ORDER OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT ✦ SACRED HEART PROVINCE - CANADA  
A Statement by the Order of St. Basil the Great of St. Josaphat (Basilian Fathers)  
Regarding their Apostolate in the Toronto Area and the Property at 3100 Weston Road

August 16, 2023

23-025

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Слава Ісусу Христу! Glory be to Jesus Christ!

Almost 70 years ago, the Order of St. Basil the Great of St. Josaphat (Basilian Fathers) came to the Toronto area to share Christ's love, wisdom, and mercy through their teaching apostolate at St. Basil the Great College School, their apostolate of the printed word at the Basilian Press (Ukrainian), and their pastoral apostolate at both St. Basil's Parish (on Vaughn Road) and St. Volodymyr Parish (in Thornhill). They established their monastery at 3100 Weston Road, next to the College, and dedicated it to St. Gregory of Nyssa.

In recent times, due to the many changes in modern society, a declining membership from a general lack of vocations to the Basilian Order (with no vocations coming from the Toronto area), and an aging membership, it has become necessary to consolidate the Order's Apostolate in Canada. In 1999, the Order withdrew the last of its members from the College; in 2004, it relinquished its pastoral duties at St. Basil's Parish; in 2016, it transferred the pastoral care of St. Volodymyr Parish back to the Eparchy of Toronto; The Basilian Press ceased operations on August 31, 2016, and the last of the members of the Basilian Religious community living in the monastery have been transferred to other Basilian monasteries in Canada. For the past 7 years, the Basilian Order in Canada has been responsible for the upkeep of its monastery building & grounds—a task that demanded not only significant financial resources, but also strained the Order's personnel, despite the Order no longer having any ministry in the Toronto area.

The decision to close the Basilian Apostolate in the Toronto area was not made lightly. After several years of preliminary discussions and much prayer and reflection, a resolution to close this Apostolate was passed at the Order's Provincial Chapter in February 2016 and was confirmed by the General Superior of the Basilian Order in Rome, along with his Council. This resolution was also carried forward and passed at the Order's Provincial Chapter in February 2020 and was once again confirmed by the General Superior of the Basilian Order in Rome, along with his Council. In April 2023, the Very Reverend Robert Lisseiko, OSBM, (the current General Superior of the Basilian Order) made a personal on-site visit to the property and confirmed the need for the Order in Canada to divest itself of the surplus property, whereby completing the mandate of the resolution of the Provincial Chapters of 2016 and 2020.

A purchase agreement for the entire property at 3100 Weston Road has been reached and is in its very final stages of completion. This means that the ownership of the property will be changing—the existing lease agreement with the City of Toronto operating the Carmine Stefano Community Centre (including the soccer fields below) remains fully intact, however, all public access to the monastery grounds (including the “prayer garden”, “shrine”, etc.) is restricted as it becomes the private property of the new owners. The religious articles in the prayer garden (i.e., Stations of the Cross, candle stands, statues, etc.) will be reverently removed from the site and, if possible, donated to other groups that can make use of them. In other words, the “Shrine” is permanently closed.


The reality is that the Basilian monastic community in Toronto is simply no longer viable; in 2023 this is even more apparent than it was 7 years ago. Currently, there are many untrue stories in circulation about this situation, which is unfortunate. We truly regret this and appeal in Christ’s name to those involved that they keep harmony, peace and respect for one another. If there are any questions or concerns in this matter, they should be directed to the Provincial Superior of the Order of St. Basil the Great of St. Josaphat in Canada, as he is the only person who speaks for the Order’s affairs in Canada.

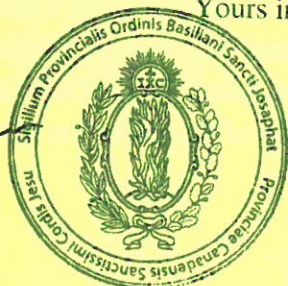
Dear brothers and sisters, the decades of the Basilian Order’s Apostolate in the Toronto area leaves behind a strong legacy: the thousands of students that have received a solid Catholic educational and spiritual upbringing at the School have gone on to become productive members of society and their respective faith communities, who in turn, will mentor and influence future generations of youth in the Catholic tradition in the Toronto area. This legacy is priceless and cannot ever be taken away.

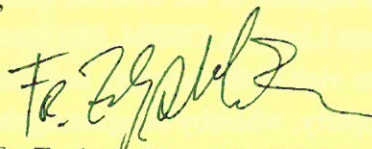
Once again, as I did in 2016, I implore you to harness that energy that you are currently using “to save a monastery and/or shrine” and to put this zeal and passion into the pastoral activities and outreaches within your own parishes; offer your many talents and gifts in your own parish communities as offerings to God; deepen your personal relationship with God through prayer and spiritual contemplation. God’s healing graces are infinite and are never confined to a specific time and/or place. In the Greater Toronto area, there are many Eucharistic shrine chapels that are open 24/7 that you may visit and spend time at the feet of Christ. His presence is the same as it was 2000 years ago when he walked on this earth—in the words of St. Paul, “Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” Let us listen to Christ, as his mother Mary said at the Wedding at Cana (Christ’s First Miracle): “Do whatever he tells you to do.”

Peace be with you!

Yours in Christ,

  
Fr. Gabriel Haber, OSBM  
Provincial Superior



  
Fr. Zachary Shwaluk, OSBM  
Provincial Secretary/Treasurer

**From:** [AvranceCorp Developments](#)  
**To:** [City Clerks - Heritage](#)  
**Subject:** [External Sender] 3100 Weston Rd Legal Owner written Speech  
**Date:** October 10, 2023 1:13:39 AM  
**Attachments:** [press release.pdf](#)

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My name is Samuel Babs, the CEO of AvranceCorp Developments and a part owner of this property.

First and foremost, the prayer garden also known as the “shrine” no longer exist at this site. The church dismantled the religious artifacts and stored them in a nearby storage for the organizers to collect. They gave the organizers 60 days to pick up the items, which no one has cared to show up to claim, as the church continues to pay the storage fees to keep these items.

In accordance to the *Property Rights and Responsibilities Act, 2009. s.9.1(1) and (2)*

*9.1 (1) Every person has a right to own the real and personal property that he or she has acquired in accordance with law and, except to the extent provided by law, to the peaceful enjoyment and free disposition of the property.*

*(2) No one may enter onto another person's real property or into another person's home, whether or not the person is the owner of the home, or take any personal property from the real property or home without the person's express or implied consent, except to the extent provided by law.*

Our right to the peaceful enjoyment of our property has been violated throughout this process by the Squatters who created and turn the section of our property into a so called “shrine”. Furthermore the organizers and the worshippers continue to break the law by entering our property without our express or implied consent, which is in direct violation of Bill 190 Property rights and responsibilities.

We purchased this property from the St Basil Order on the 21st of August 2023, after obtaining a clear written consent from the Vatican on the 22nd of December 2022. The church released a press release (attached) to the shrine organizers and worshippers aka squatters, that the Catholic Church is not in support of this “shrine”. They encouraged the worshippers to take their property off our property and find a new location to continue their activities. The Archbishop of Toronto and St. Basil order have officially said on record, that this location is not designated or recognized as a shrine by any means.

I don't understand why Councillor Antony Perruzza and the NDP MPP Tom continue to mislead their constituents by creating a false impression that the “shrine” is of an Heritage Value to this property This misconception has been clarified on numerous occasions by the Church to the contrary. Passing a motion to designate 13.5 acre land as an heritage without doing a thorough feasibility assessment of the property is very

disturbing. How can the council pass a motion to consider a designation of an empty land with no heritage significance as a heritage? The house and the pool sits on just 3+ acres. What is the intent and the use of proposing to designate the entire 13.5 acre as heritage? We have retained an Heritage consultant who has conducted a thorough review of this property. The conclusion of this thorough assessment led to our decision to maintain and conserve the house and the pool as Heritage, with or without the City's heritage designation.

The image attached clearly shows the original use of the property by the original owners in the 1950s. The original owners built the pool in 1919, which was used to host various charitable events in the community. This cause serves the community at large.

The squatters moved in illegally without the consent of the property owner in late 1990s after the church decommissioned the chapel and moved out to Manitoba, due to low memberships in Toronto. The church asked the squatters to leave countless of times but met with threats and verbal abuse. The organizer Angie, was previously evicted by the City of Toronto, from the community centre prior to starting the prayer garden, after breaking numerous bylaws.

Our intent as the new legal property owner is to conserve the Heritage components of the house and the pool and to reinstate the pool back to its glorious days, in order to host various charitable events, which would benefit the community at large, not just the minority worshippers.

Mariam Shrine of Gratitude has no legal or registered status as a charitable organization. They have been collecting thousands of dollars from the public for years without declaring any of it to the CRA. They are operating illegally both on the property and as an entity. We are taking appropriate steps to get this organization investigated by the authorities, including the CRA.

A motion to consider and maintain the prayer garden on this property as a "shrine" would set a bad precedent and message in the City of Toronto, where squatters could invade people's properties without the property owner's consent, to do whatever they like, which certainly would result in multitude of multi million dollar lawsuits in the communities and the City of Toronto.

I would encourage this body to carry out a thorough study on this subject prior to issuing a recommendation to the Council on this matter. Any attempts to reinstate the prayer garden on this property or deemed the shrine as heritage value shall be appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal as recently permitted by Bill 103.

Kind Regards

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