



Archdiocese  
of Vancouver

JOHN PAUL II PASTORAL CENTRE

150 Robson St.  
Vancouver, BC  
V6B 2A7

T: 604-683-0281  
F: 604-683-4288

## COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

# Catholic parishes to upgrade schools, churches for earthquake safety

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE June 8, 2013

VANCOUVER – Archbishop J. Michael Miller has asked all parishes in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Vancouver to develop detailed plans by Nov. 30, 2015, to renew or rebuild their schools, churches and other buildings to meet the latest earthquake codes.

The announcement follows a year-long engineering study commissioned by the Archdiocese to assess the risks to schools, churches and halls in the event of a major earthquake. The report showed buildings ranging from needing little to no work, to those requiring extensive upgrades.

As an additional step, the Archdiocese will work with the University of British Columbia's Department of Civil Engineering to introduce inexpensive earthquake warning technology into schools and churches. By equipping buildings with P-wave sensors, schools can get a brief early warning when an earthquake is imminent and also receive technical data on the safety of a building following an earthquake.

"These sensors will allow the Archdiocese to become a leader in Canada when it comes to seismic preparedness," said Archbishop Miller.

"This technology has been shown to work and save lives," said Carlos Ventura, a professor and director of the Earthquake Engineering Research Facility at UBC.

The Archdiocese will also guarantee bank loans on behalf of parishes to help them finance upgrades.

The Archbishop said the scale of the initiative is a providential opportunity to promote shared responsibility and stewardship of resources in the Catholic community. "Over the past 20 years, we have spent \$250 million on various building projects. If we continue at that pace, we'll be on track to meet these challenges," he said.



## COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

The engineering report by Ausenco provides a general report on school and other parish buildings. Each parish, however, will need to commission a more detailed engineering analysis to plan for renewal and development of its buildings. Parishioners are being given details for their parish by their pastors over the coming weeks, and the Archdiocese will post reports for all the parishes online at the end of June.

The B.C. government is spending \$1.5 billion over 15 years to bring public schools to current seismic standards. Because the provincial government does not provide capital funding to independent schools, the Archdiocese itself must raise the money for its own schools.

“Today’s announcement is only the first step in what will be a very long-term project,” said Archbishop Miller. “It will be challenging, but I’m confident that with God’s help the people of the Archdiocese will rise to meet this challenge.”

For more information visit [www.rcav.org/infrastructure](http://www.rcav.org/infrastructure). For photos of archdiocesan buildings, or to interview a parish priest about the infrastructure upgrade program, please contact:

Paul Schratz, [communications@rcav.org](mailto:communications@rcav.org) 604-505-9411



For information about P-wave technology, please contact:

Carlos Ventura, [ventura@civil.ubc.ca](mailto:ventura@civil.ubc.ca) 604-822-6946