



Archdiocese of Cape Town



Dear Sisters and Brothers

I have asked for this to be read to you to allay any possible anxiety or misapprehension you may have regarding recent inaccurate media reports concerning Catholic Welfare and Development's property in Lawrence Road, Athlone.

A full account of the facts is posted on the parish notice board, but briefly, it has been alleged that CWD has taken a decision to sell the Athlone property. This is not true, and the people behind the allegations have been repeatedly told this. Yet, they have instituted a media campaign which is aimed at pressuring CWD and the Archdiocese of Cape Town to retain its use as a so-called cultural hub. There was also an orchestrated illegal occupation of the property two weeks ago, which damaged the property and caused CWD to be granted an urgent court order against the person behind the campaign.

I must emphasise that CWD is the legal owner of the property. While it is the welfare arm of the Archdiocese, it is autonomous and runs its own affairs under the direction of its Board. However, as I stated in my previous letter to you, CWD has been forced to shut because of overwhelming debts accumulated by its previous board and management. The Archdiocese has intervened to ensure an orderly shut down of CWD, that all staff were paid a just retrenchment package, and to help to independence those programmes that were able.

Some property will have to be sold to pay CWD's debts. After all debts have been paid, the remaining properties will be transferred to the Archdiocese of Cape Town to be used for future welfare and development work.

The Athlone property has been in Catholic hands for over seventy years. I have indicated to CWD's Board that I would like them to retain the Athlone property to be used for the welfare and other needs of the Church.

In discerning the welfare needs of the Archdiocese of Cape Town, we will consult parishes and the wider Catholic community in the Archdiocese.

I am distressed that a needless campaign has been waged against CWD at a very difficult time and hope that the Catholic community can use its buildings in peace, for the welfare and development work that is still so sorely needed in this Archdiocese.

I wish you all every blessing and good wishes for a grace-filled season of Lent.

Sincerely in Christ,

+Stephen Brislin
Archbishop of Cape Town



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Cathedral Place 12 Bouquet Street • PO Box 2910 Cape Town 8000.

Tel: +27 (21) 462 2417 • Fax: +27 (21) 465 2914

Email: archbishop@adct.org.za • Web: www.adct.org.za