News

Cardinal Dolan

New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan announced Nov. 8 the archdiocese was laying off 18 employees. Here, he delivers his homily during Easter Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City March 31. (OSV News/Gregory Shemitz)



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Cardinal Timothy Dolan laid off 18 employees on Nov. 8 as part of a financial restructuring across various offices of the Archdiocese of New York to save at least $1.5 million, the archbishop and a spokesman said.

Specific departments and offices involved were not identified because individuals were still being notified, spokesman Joseph Zwilling told the National Catholic Reporter. The restructuring is linked to undisclosed financial pressures and plans to relocate the chancery out of the Catholic Center's Cardinal Cooke Building.

Revenues are down from parish collection plates in many dioceses across the nation, while legal expenses due to clergy sexual abuse lawsuits have been increasing. Many religious institutions in recent years have suffered financially, largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly reduced in-person attendance at church

services. The Archdiocese of New York, the second largest diocese in the U.S., has not been immune to these pocketbook pressures.

The news was announced in a letter from Dolan to the archdiocese and staff sent Nov. 8. "I am grateful for the service of all those whose positions are being eliminated," Dolan said.

"Such decisions are never easy, but the current financial crunch the archdiocese faces, and the upcoming move to our new offices in 2025, make this the appropriate time to make some tough decisions," Dolan wrote.

The Cardinal Cooke Building, which has housed archdiocesan offices since 1973, is being sold. While there is a buyer, Zwilling said, the sale has yet to be finalized. Terms have not been disclosed.

Following the sale, the archdiocese plans to relocate to a smaller office space at 488 Madison Ave., one block from St. Patrick’s Cathedral on 5th Avenue. Construction is underway at the new location, and the archdiocese anticipates the move will be completed by late spring or early summer 2025.

The layoffs at the Cardinal Cooke Building and across the archdiocese affect workers who have been part of the institution for years, supporting various ministries, administrative departments and operational tasks.

Dolan said in his letter that an undisclosed amount of the money saved will be reinvested into parish communities. The archdiocese plans to establish a new grant program for parishes to apply for funding to support local ministry initiatives. Through this program, a portion of the savings will be redirected to enhance pastoral projects and strengthen parish-level outreach, the cardinal wrote.

The archdiocese told NCR that the grant program will be set up soon. "The concept is that parishes will be able to apply for a grant for a local pastoral initiative that they would like to begin," Zwilling said.

A committee will be established to review the applications and decide which grants to fund, he added. It remains unclear who will sit on the committee or whether the archdiocese will set certain pastoral priorities.

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