



Archevêque de Montréal

April 5, 2019

Dear fellow priests,
Dear pastoral teams,
Dear faithful in Christ,

Every sexual abuse of a minor leaves many victims in its wake: the victim themselves, their family, their community, the faith of many people, priests and the Church. For the past year, from Chile to the Vatican summit on sex abuse, various events have brought this crime to the forefront; a crime which goes against Jesus Christ who identifies himself with littlest ones. In our own diocese a priest has recently been convicted, which leaves us in a state of shock.

We have put into place and are working to further develop a counseling team for the victims, an interdisciplinary advisory committee and a Responsible Pastoral Ministry policy. The announced audit of our archives that will be managed externally by a retired judge, will help us discover the truth that liberates and avoid being satisfied with generalizations. It will also help us learn how to better care for the victims, improve the pursuit of justice by means of rigorous protocols, and better prevent abuses through practices that strengthen safety measures and build confidence.

Prevention is key; because the objective is that these tragedies never happen again. The zero-tolerance policy in which a priest or any other person found guilty would no longer retain a position in the diocese, aims to dissuade all potential predators and express how seriously we take each crime.

In the case of caring for victims, we will take all allegations seriously, and in cases where it is applicable find paths for peacemaking, healing, and reconciliation. In this context we can understand the recent collective action against our diocese. Our mission remains to always pray, to gather together, to serve and to bear witness to Jesus Christ in the world today.

Dear fellow priests, once again I offer you my greatest appreciation for your dedication, your faithfulness, your love for Jesus Christ and his Church. I have full confidence in you. The people of God trust in you and love you. Dear brothers and sisters, dear parishes, I pledge my unwavering support and assurance that the archdiocese is at your service so that no person and no community feels isolated in this struggle.

Dear faithful in Christ, let us turn to Merciful Jesus. We are in Lent together and we will soon enter into Holy Week. We will remember Jesus Christ Crucified and Resurrected. He carries our suffering and our sins on his cross, and He manifests his power of peace, healing and reconciliation. I invite all of us to pray the Divine Mercy chaplet until the first Sunday after Easter, Divine Mercy Sunday.

Let us pray for the victims, the families, the affected communities, the people whose faith has been tested, priests and the entire Church. Let us pray for the guilty.

Together let us say: “Jesus Christ, with your pierced heart, I adore you and trust in you.”

Your archbishop,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Christian Lépine". The signature is written in a cursive style, with a large, stylized initial 'C'.

† Christian Lépine

ps: according to their discernment, I invite all priests to read this message at the end of each Sunday Mass this Lent