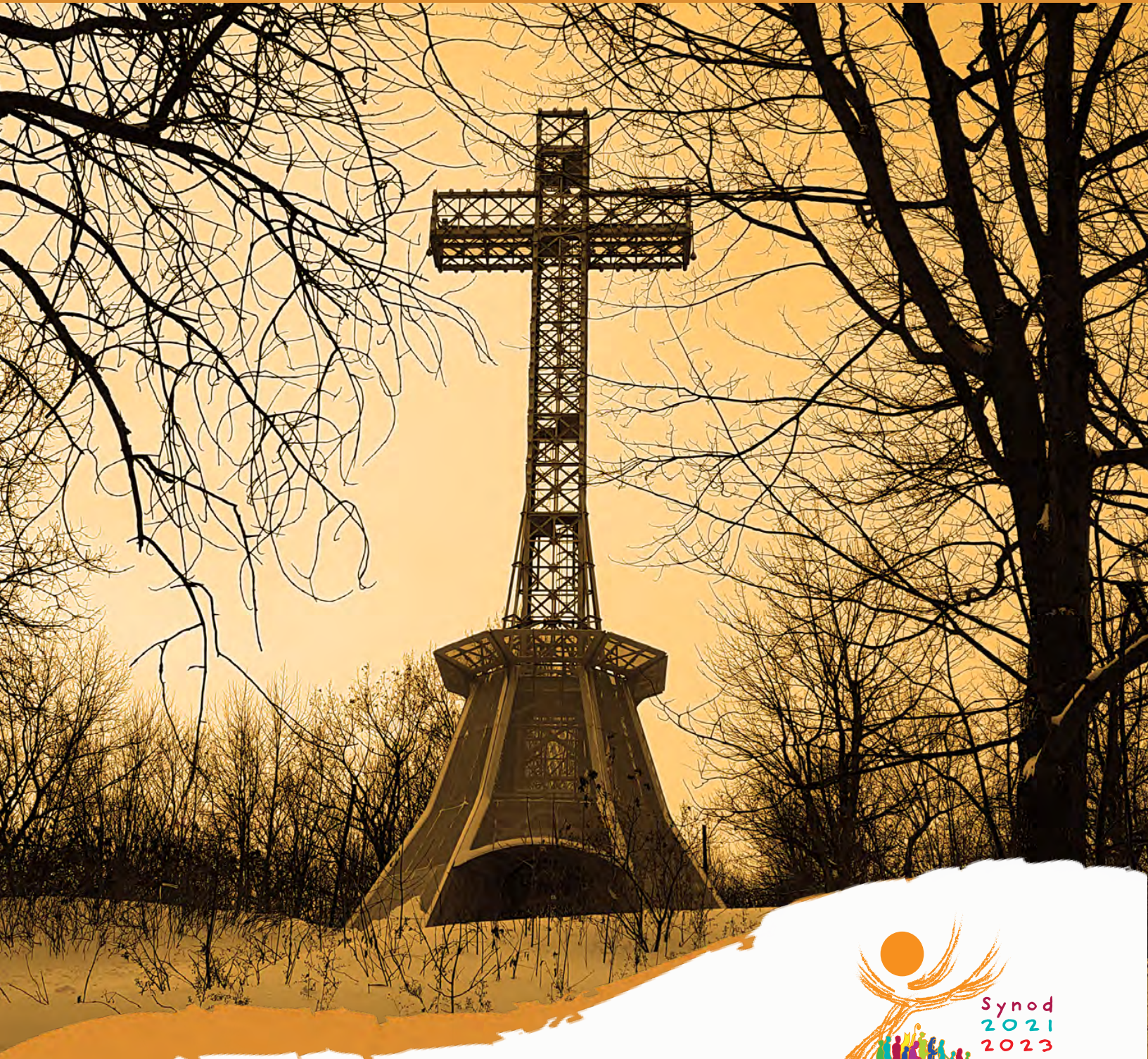




DIOCESAN HANDBOOK

Diocesan Roadwork for the Missionary Transformation

version 1.0



Catholic Church of Montreal



Synod
2021
2023

For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission

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SEE
DISCERN
SERVE

Presentation of the Diocesan Handbook



In September 2018, following the call of Pope Francis in "The Joy of the Gospel,"

our archbishop, Archbishop Christian Lépine inaugurated our diocesan roadwork for the missionary transformation of our Church; a process in three stages:

SEE – DISCERN – SERVE

which is to be lived **PRAYERFULLY** and **TOGETHER!**

Today, as our pope engages the entire Church in a synodal process on synodality, that is, on our way of "journeying together," we must recognize the absolute necessity of journeying together for this transformation to occur.

In Montreal, we intend to take the opportunity the synod offers to pursue our efforts in this direction. In the next few months, through our prayer, by listening to the world that surrounds us, and through our small group discussions, we will seek to discern the steps the Spirit is inviting us to take in order to truly become a missionary Church for the people in our midst.

Today, we are offering you a Diocesan Handbook that includes two documents:

- (1) a **Facilitation Guide** to help lead small groups in a reflection process;
- (2) a **Reflection Guide** that, as its name indicates, includes a series of reflections and considerations, aimed at helping each person express themselves on the quality of our synodal life in Montreal and on what they discern are the calls of the Holy Spirit for the evangelical mission that has been entrusted to us.

This handbook, essential for facilitating group discussions, is at the core of our diocesan process. To assist you, we are providing various other resources in the [Diocesan Toolkit](#). These resources, along with other information, are available on the [diocesan microsite for the synod](#). They will help you to understand where we are coming from, where we are at and where we are headed in our diocesan roadwork for the missionary transformation of our Church.

We can already begin to consider organizing small group meetings in your parish, your organization or your movement, with the aim of initiating dialogue with people who do not

Presentation of the Diocesan Handbook

regularly attend our activities. When you read the documents, you will notice that you have flexibility/choice in your approach. You can focus on one or more themes, a topic within a broader theme as you engage in dialogue with the people in your local community. While we are recommending small group discussions, all initiatives and creative ideas that would help create spaces and platforms for dialogue with others are welcome: surveys, social networks, participation in neighbourhood events, etc.

We are giving ourselves until mid-spring for this first phase of the synodal process, for initiatives to speak out, work in small groups and share our ideas. Then, we will be able to identify some orientations, courses of action, and major priorities for our diocese. We are at this point; we cannot turn back. The objective is first to answer two very simple questions that have far-reaching implications.

Question 1 : *In our diocesan Church, what is the current state of our “journeying together” and what steps is the Holy Spirit inviting us to take in order to advance toward this goal?*

Question 2 : *By listening to the world around us, what are the calls of the Spirit that will guide our missionary action?*

It is very possible that locally more concrete ideas of actions to be taken can emerge, in relation to the specific needs of the community. When the Spirit invites us, we must respond! Local initiatives and actions will surely emerge along the way. *Still, let’s remember our motto: “Together”.* This is a call not to work alone, but to create partnerships with our neighbours and/or with organizations that share our values, and above all to remain in communion within the diocesan process.

Just like the disciples whom Jesus sent into the world, let us ask the Lord to keep our hearts open and to renew our zeal, so that we may reach out to others.

The Diocesan Missionary Roadwork
Steering Committee

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Facilitation Guide

Sample Facilitation Guide

Facilitation process of a small group meeting or of a series of small group meetings

This sample Facilitation Guide seeks to help participants respond in a synodal way to the two big questions of our synod. We encourage you to adapt it to your local situation and particularly to your participants.

The two fundamental synod questions are:

Question 1 :

In our diocesan Church, what is the current state of our “journeying together” and what steps is the Spirit inviting us to take in order to grow toward this objective?

Question 2 :

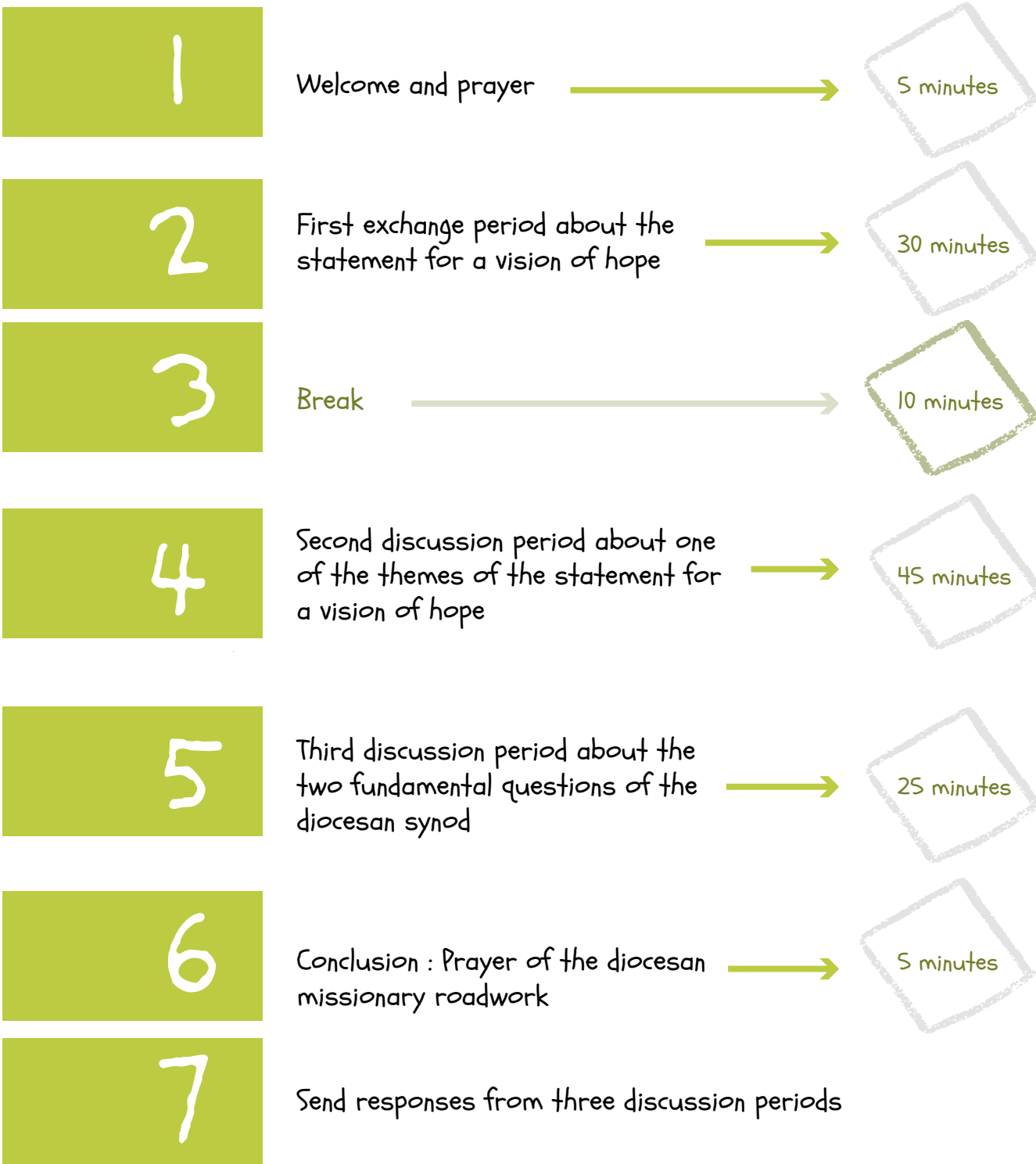
By listening to the world that around us, what are the calls of the Spirit that will guide our missionary action?



Sample Meeting | Summary



You will find a detailed description of each element on the next page.



Sample Meeting | Detailed

This is a detailed explanation of the summary of the proposed sample process presented on the previous page.

Before the meeting

1. Consult the resources in the [Diocesan Toolkit](#) to help you (prayer, origin of the statement for a vision of hope and its link with our synodal process, summary of the testimonies from the **SEE-LISTEN** stage, etc.)
2. If possible, choose a theme for the meeting together (see the [Reflection Guide](#) further on) and send participants the necessary information, so they may pray about and contemplate the theme prior to the meeting.

During the meeting (two-hour duration)

1. Welcome and prayer (pray the Adsumus in the [Diocesan Toolkit](#))
5 minutes
2. First discussion period about the statement for a vision of hope
30 minutes

In a large group or in small groups of 5 to 6 people: The large group or each small group must choose someone who will take notes about what will be shared during the meeting.

A. Present statement for a vision of hope:

"In Jesus Christ, let us build a living Church that allows itself to be evangelized, is welcoming and close to the people."

To understand the origins of this statement, see the resources in the [Diocesan Toolkit](#).



Sample Meeting | Detailed (cont'd)

- B.** Questions to facilitate the discussion:
- How are you receiving this statement?
 - What thoughts does it bring to mind?
 - Which elements strike you or are particularly challenging to you?
 - Which aspects are missing or insufficiently highlighted?

- C.** As needed, share with the group some points to reflect on from the Word of God, from the summary of **SEE-LISTEN** (see the [Diocesan Toolkit](#)), and set aside some time for prayer and meditation.

3. Break

10 minutes

- 4.** Second discussion period about one of the themes in the statement for a vision of hope: What the Spirit is telling me.

45 minutes

In groups of 5 to 6 people” Each group must choose someone who will take notes about what will be shared for points c. and e.

- A.** Each group reflects more deeply on the theme they chose or the organizers did. (see the [Reflection Guide](#) further on in this document)

1-5 minutes

- B.** Time for personal prayer and meditation on the “Points to Consider” and “Reflection Questions” for each theme

5 minutes

- C.** Each person shares their insights from prayer on the “Points to Consider” and on the “Reflection Questions.” The other members listen but do not respond.

2-3 min per person

In the case of a series of meetings, the second discussion period may be repeated for each theme.



Sample Meeting | Detailed (cont'd)



- D.** Time for personal prayer and meditation on what my sisters and brothers just shared.
2 minutes
- E.** Each person shares the insights gleaned from what they heard their sisters and brothers say during the sharing period. The other members listen but do not respond.
2-3 minutes per person
- F.** Period of silence, for individual prayer and reflection
2 minutes

S. Third discussion period about the two fundamental questions of the diocesan synod:
What the Spirit is telling us
25 minutes

A. Participants note the elements that emerged from the previous two discussion periods, which respond to the questions below. Here, each person is mainly invited to recall what their sisters and brothers shared.

Question 1 :

In our diocesan Church, what is the current state of our "journeying together" and what steps is the Spirit inviting us to take in order to advance toward this goal? Which initiatives should be maintained (continued, reinforced)?
What are changes to consider (to modify, to discontinue)?
What new steps might we take (to begin, to create)?

Question 2 :

By listening to the world around us, what are the calls of the Spirit that will guide our missionary action? Which initiatives should be maintained, (continued, reinforced)?
What are changes to consider (to modify, to discontinue)? What new steps might we take (to begin, to create)?

In the case of a series of meetings, the third discussion period may be repeated for each theme.

6. Conclusion: Prayer of the diocesan missionary roadwork (see the [Diocesan Toolkit](#))
5 minutes

7. Each small group sends meeting organizers their notes about what was discussed during the three discussion periods.



Reflection Guide

Statement for a vision of hope

"In Jesus Christ, let us build a life-giving Church,
one that is open to being evangelized,
and that is welcoming and close to people."

For the second discussion period in the small group process (see the Facilitation Guide presented earlier) focused on one of the themes in the "statement for a vision of hope," this Reflection Guide presents:

- Some points to consider to help bring about a fresh perspective on our "journeying together" and on the missionary calls that emerge from our listening to the Holy Spirit, and;
- Two reflection questions that will help us to identify some ways forward and to respond to the fundamental questions in step 5, "Consensus" (see the Facilitation Guide).

N.B.: The acronym *RS*, accompanied by Roman numerals and a number, refers to the Preparatory Document for the Roman Synod (*RS*), the 10 themes presented in the Preparatory Document, and the sub-questions suggested for each theme (*Preparatory Document, no. 30*).



communion
participation
mission

Reflection A

“In Jesus Christ” (Rooted in Jesus Christ)

Points to Consider:

- Christ and his way of being “synodal,” by walking with his disciples, of listening to the men and women of his day, of following the Father’s will, in his words and actions;
- Our way (in the parish, diocese, community) of listening to and sharing the Word of God; our way (in the parish, diocese, community) of praying and living the sacraments;
- Our way (in the parish, diocese, community) of making decisions relying on the prayer and discernment of all members of the community;

Reflection Questions:

- (A1)** How do our listening to the Word and our community prayer actually inspire and guide our “journeying together,” our most important decisions? (RS IV.1; RS IV.2)
- (A2)** Which missionary approaches (fields of action; major objectives) do we discern for our Church in the manner of Jesus Christ, that is, in his way of being and acting?



Reflection B

“Let us build...”
(Together)

B

Points to Consider:

- That a synodal Church is a Church of participation and co-responsibility; (RS VIII “Authority and Participation”)
- That synodality is at the service of the mission of the Church, in which all of its members are called to participate; (RS V “Co-responsible in the Mission”)
- That, in a synodal style, decisions are made through a discernment process, based on a consensus that flows from the common obedience to the Spirit (RS IX)
- That “synodal organizations” that foster encounter and dialogue (e.g., community meetings; parish and diocesan councils; work teams, committees) make our synodal life concrete; (RS VI “Dialogue in Church and Society”; (RS VI “Dialogue in Church and Society”; RS IX “Discerning and Deciding”)
- That our way of combining leadership and participation, of discerning and deciding together, can be a witness to the Gospel and a beacon for our world.

Reflection Questions:

- (B1) How do we evaluate the functioning and the fruitfulness of the “synodal organizations” of our Church: in the parish, diocese, community?
- (B2) Which missionary approaches (fields of action; major objectives) do we discern faced with the challenge of ensuring the participation of all our members and of making decisions together?

Reflection C

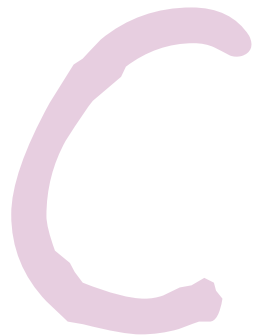
“One Church” (People on a journey)

Points to Consider:

- The different ways the baptized belong to and participate in the life of our Church; (RS I “The Journeying Companions”)
- The richness of the different Catholic churches, Western and Eastern, present in Montreal, and those of various Christian denominations; the fruitfulness of a common witness; (RS VII)
- The need to listen, to encourage as many people as possible to speak out, and to integrate the contribution of a wide variety of people; (RS II “Listening”; RS III “Speaking Out”)

Reflection Questions:

- (C1) How do we evaluate our ability to integrate “unity” and “diversity” (of people, points of view, cultures, multiple traditions and denominations) in our life as a Church in the Archdiocese of Montreal?
- (C2) Which missionary approaches (fields of action; major objectives) do we discern as we face the challenge of “living together” in the Montreal region?



Reflection D

"Life-giving"

(Committed to "life in abundance" for people in our communities)

Points to Consider:

- That Jesus came so that we may have life in abundance (cf. Jn 10:10); and that "this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." (Jn 17:3)
- That the proclamation of the kingdom of God becomes a reality through actions and words: "cure the sick who are there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'" (Lk 10:9)
- The interests and currents of thought that now prevail in our society;
- The search for meaning and the yearning for happiness we see in those around us; the things, places and causes in which people invest themselves.
- The addictions and the subjection to other forms of servitude that impede the lives of the people we meet;

Reflection Questions:

- (D1) How do we evaluate our capacity to discern together, within the Church, the challenges our contemporaries face in living "life in abundance"?
- (D2) Which missionary approaches (fields of action; major objectives) for our Church emerge from listening to these needs for "life in abundance"?



Reflection E

"That is open to being evangelized" (Transformed/moved by the Gospel and its call to conversion)

Points to Consider:

- That the Church is "at the same time holy and always in need of being purified, always follows the way of penance and renewal." (*Lumen gentium*, 8)
- That the Church is sent to evangelize, to share the Good News; but that it cannot give what it has not received and integrated.
- That we ourselves are evangelized in our encounter with the other: through the sometimes-dramatic experience with the less fortunate or when opinions that are different from our own are expressed, etc.

Reflection Questions:

- (E1) Which calls to conversion are we discerning together, so that our diocesan Church may be more faithful to the Gospel?
- (E2) What importance is given to the experience and the voice of minorities, of the marginalized, the excluded and the less fortunate in our community? (*RS II*)

E

Reflection F

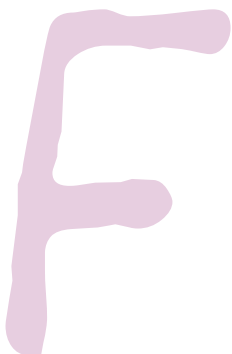
“Welcoming” (Where everyone can find their place)

Points to Consider:

- The reasons people come into contact with our community or request our services;
- The important areas of our fellow citizens' life for which they do not call upon the Church;
- The actual, concrete ways we live as a Church that create obstacles for those who approach us;
- The people and the groups for whom we lack a welcoming attitude or a listening ear, who are left on the margins, either deliberately or in reality (RS I.5; RS II.1);
- The prejudice and stereotypes that create obstacles to listening (RS II.5);

Reflection Questions:

- (F1) How do we evaluate the ability of our community to welcome all people who come to us, whatever their reason?
- (F2) Which missionary approaches (fields of action; major objectives) do we discern faced with the challenges of welcome, integration and inclusion experienced by our contemporaries in society?



Reflection G

“Close to people”

(In solidarity with the joys, hopes, griefs and anxieties of the world)

Points to Consider:

- Our listening to the social and cultural context in which we live; (RS II.6) the analytical tools we use (information from media; statistics; surveys; scientific studies, etc.) to assess social dynamics; (RS X.3)
- The socioeconomic profile of our local community (neighbourhood, city);
- Our dialogue with the diverse levels of society: the world of politics, the economy, culture, civil society, the poor... ; (RS VI.5)
- Our society, influenced by mass media and communications and social networks; (RS III)
- The commitment of Christians to service within our communities (community involvement, political action, teaching, research, justice, peace, the environment); (RS V.2)
- Our dialogue and our commitment, with believers and non-believers from various backgrounds, for the common good; (RS VI.4)

Reflection Questions:

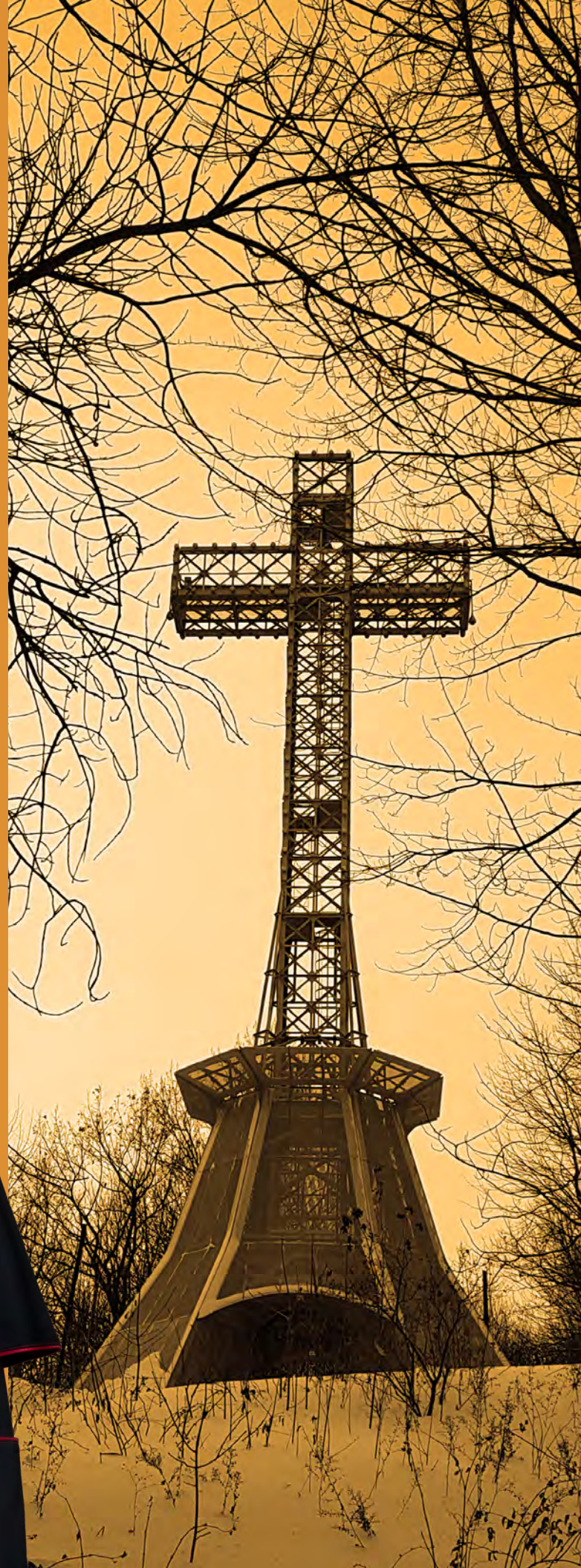
- (G1) How do we evaluate the care and attention we give as a community and as a diocesan Church to the joys, hopes, anxieties and grief of our contemporaries?
- (G2) Who are the people, or categories of people, in our local communities or in our diocese to whom the Holy Spirit calls us to be close and in solidarity?



Together on a mission



Archbishop Lépine





GUIDE DIOCÉSAIN

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