

## Communiqué

### Ombudsman of the Archdiocese of Montreal

#### Files first report

**Montreal, September 9, 2021** – The Archdiocese of Montreal today released the first report prepared by Ombudsman Me. Marie Christine Kirouack, *Ad. E.*, who assumed the position May 4.

"I could feel the pain of those who contacted me. In many cases, I was the first person they had told, the first person to believe them. They told me what it meant to them to have their voices heard and how much they appreciated the process that has been set up to support them," stated the Ombudsman of the Catholic Church of Montréal. "I hope that this report will encourage other victims to file complaints and, thereby, help put an end to these abuses once and for all," Me. Kirouack said.

The report presents a statistical analysis of 45 formal complaints received by the independent Ombudsman. Twenty-six cite various forms of abuse: physical, psychological, financial or sexual, of which 22 involved sexual abuse. The majority of sexual-abuse complaints (15) occurred between the 1950s and the early 1970s in religious-run schools which were not under direct supervision of the Archdiocese but which operated within its territory.

Of the other 19 formal complaints, 13 primarily concerned various difficulties between employees and clergy and are being dealt with by the Office for Pastoral Personnel. The remaining six complaints involved various issues unrelated to clergy, such as cemetery maintenance, funerals or genealogical research; these have been referred to the Vicar General.

In addition, the report records 21 complaints received concerning issues outside the Ombudsman's jurisdiction, such as health measures related to COVID-19 (3), complaints about orphanages (2), and reactions to the discoveries at residential schools (9).

"This first Ombudsman's report is another step toward recognizing those who have been victims and whom I encourage to come forward. My heart goes out to all those who sounded the alarm but for whom there was little follow-up or investigation. I want to express to you my deep regret for these failings, which we are resolved to overcome," said Archbishop Lépine.

The Archdiocese of Montreal launched a publicity campaign last spring informing the public that the position of Ombudsman had been instituted and encouraging any person who may have been a victim of abuse to file a complaint.

The statistical report is public and is available in its entirety on the [Catholic Church of Montreal's](https://www.catholicmontreal.org/) website.

To request an interview, please contact the Ombudsman:

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