



**Communiqué
For immediate release**

Gradual reopening of churches:

The Catholic Church in Montreal looks confidently toward the future

Montreal, June 17, 2020 – Archbishop Christian Lépine of Montreal would like to thank both the pastoral team members and volunteers of the Catholic Church in Montreal for giving their best these past few months without counting the cost, as well as the government leaders and public-health officials for recognizing that care of the soul is as essential for every human person as is care of the body.

"Faced with the distress, loneliness and suffering precipitated by this period of confinement and the closing of church doors, numerous pastoral teams within the diocese have rallied, as best they could, to offer spiritual support to believers. At the local level, we have worked hard to put the necessary protocols and guidelines in place to ensure the gradual and safe reopening of our churches. Today, we welcome the news with joy and full confidence," said Archbishop Lépine.

During this period, many faithful have described feeling lost and adrift, not having access to their usual social and community surroundings. Weddings and baptisms had to be postponed, only adding to the distress that couples and their families have experienced.

"The suffering related to sickness and grief is something that none of us have escaped. This suffering was compounded by conditions that made it difficult to be at the bedside of someone whom we loved and who was approaching the end of life. Added to this were the restrictions governing how we gather together to mourn as a family, with friends and acquaintances, at the funeral home, church and cemetery," the Archbishop noted.

The Catholic Church in Montreal intends to pursue various initiatives, some of which were inaugurated during confinement to support believers and Christian communities on a daily basis, including the broadcasting of masses live on Facebook and the online publication of "Care for the Soul" video capsules, featuring Archbishop Lépine, 77 of which have been transmitted to date.

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