



Archevêque de Montréal

Message  
**A BIG THANK YOU**

December 27, 2021

Dear brothers and sisters in faith,

Dear pastoral staff members,

Dear volunteer teams,

In this important season of Christmas, you celebrated the birth of Jesus at home, online, in church. Thank you for your living witness to the Love of God, who came for all people and who always watches over us with loving-kindness.

I commend particularly those teams that made it possible to hold celebrations in churches. Whether it involved enforcing the vaccine passport, handwashing measures, one-meter distancing or masking, you knew how to welcome people with care and gentleness.

There could have been some shortcomings in notifying people and in the application of these measures, but we are constantly learning in an unceasingly evolving battle. For example, previously, the removal of masks was permitted once people were in their seats; now, they must wear masks at all times and some people may forget this rule.

There is also the issue of receiving Communion in the hand, which has been implemented since the start of the pandemic, with a few exceptions of Communion on the tongue, which disappeared after a few weeks. This Christmas, a little more than a year and a half later, these few exceptions returned and you were patient, given that we had to recall the Communion rule.

I would like to thank you for your sense of mission, your commitment and your steadfastness for the past nearly two years, and despite the fatigue, which everyone is experiencing. With your generosity and your efforts, you highlighted the importance of the spiritual life, which is an essential need.

We must continue to persevere with rigour, along with patience, dialogue and goodwill. In cases of breaches or non-compliance, we must recall the rules, implementing them with pastoral concern, proper timing and a courteous tone.

“We are all in this battle together: together following the health measures; together listening to one another; together speaking about what we find hurtful, harmful, disappointing; together in our ongoing quest to follow a path fostering health and loving-kindness.” (“The Door of the Manger is Always Open”).

May God bless you, fill you with His Light, which warms hearts, and keep you in His Peace.

† Christian Lépine  
Archbishop of Montreal