



Archevêque de Montréal

Message

THE DOOR OF THE MANGER IS ALWAYS OPEN

December 19, 2021

We have been battling COVID-19 for almost two years now. This is our second Christmas during the pandemic. We are tired. We thought we had taken measures that would enable us to move forward, and we were taking things in stride. And now the Omicron variant hits...

We will not be able to celebrate Christmas the way we had anticipated. The vaccinated are confronted with new restrictions, and the unvaccinated are confronted by more closed doors. Are we going to defeat COVID or will it defeat us? The question posed is more than a medical one.

What is happening within each of us as we live through this pandemic? To me, a child of God who wants to walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ? To my family, the hub where we gather, share and experience joy? To society, the world in which we live, seek justice and peace? And to the Church, where we celebrate, worship and profess our faith in Jesus, "God is with us"?

What is happening to the way we relate to one another? What is happening to the way I view others? If I am vaccinated, do I hold a derogatory view of the unvaccinated? If I am unvaccinated, do I hold a derogatory view of the vaccinated? Do I embrace a loving view of those around me, regardless of the stance they have taken in this battle against COVID-19?

Two thousand years ago a family – a husband with his pregnant wife – were confronted with closed doors. They were Mary and Joseph. There was no room for them in the inn. The doors were closed, but the couple chose to put their trust in God. They found a stable, and the newborn was placed in a manger... and the history of the world changed...

From every corner of the world, a great diversity of people came to the Manger: shepherds spending the night on the outskirts of town, the Magi travelling from far away and led by a star in their search for God, angels descending from heaven, singing Glory to God and proclaiming a message of peace to all people of goodwill.

The door of the Manger is always open. In the Manger, Jesus is the loving face of God gazing upon humanity, on the vaccinated and unvaccinated of this day.

Defeating this pandemic means having and maintaining a loving view toward the other, whether vaccinated or not, throughout the very real threats posed to our health, the very legitimate concerns and anxieties that plunge us into a state of darkness.

Our battle is against the pandemic. It is a battle for health. It is not a battle against anyone.

Defeating the pandemic means to be in dialogue with all people, pursuing the common good together, while respecting the dignity of every human being.

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.

Defeating the pandemic means remaining steadfast in trust and prayer. It means following the health measures. It also means continuing to be attentive to the fears and the questions raised by various sides. It means walking together and seeking ways to unite people.

Throughout this pandemic, let us keep the door of our heart open; let us always look lovingly upon humanity, inspired by the loving look of Baby Jesus gazing at us.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Christian Lépine". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross symbol at the beginning.

† Christian Lépine
Archbishop of Montreal