



Archbishop of Montreal

Pastoral Letter :

**A Church reaching out with open arms and doors**

June 29, 2020

Dear Brother Priests,

Dear Pastoral Team Members and Parish Catechetical Leaders,

Dear Members of local “Deconfinement” Committees,

Dear Volunteers,

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Given that church doors have been closed for more than three months and the concerted efforts made by your parish or mission to reach out to people, you are keenly aware of the need for spiritual care that people of all generations require. In many cases, prayer life at home has grown, together with a renewed appreciation for the family as the “domestic church.” Meanwhile, so many people have told us how much they long to be able to return to church, be it for personal prayer, to receive the Eucharist, to become actively involved once again in Church life and in society.

Church doors received the “green light” to open as of June 22; however, we remain mindful of the ongoing threat posed by COVID-19 and must continue to work toward prevention during the “deconfinement” process. From the moment visitors are welcomed at church until their departure, by providing guidelines governing indoor movement, personal prayer and liturgy, implementing the various elements of the diocesan protocol will create the appropriate safe environment that is so necessary.

As you implement the protocol locally, which includes posting your opening hours and mass times; observing the frequently mentioned measures of hand-washing, physical distancing and mask-wearing; refraining from congregational singing; and disinfecting the premises between celebrations, all these efforts help to reduce the risk of transmission through contact and the discharge of respiratory water droplets.

I would like to thank the Diocesan “Deconfinement” Committee for developing the documents and facilitating the webinars. The process entailed a considerable amount of work for the team members. Implementing the protocol at the local level will equally require a considerable amount of work for parish and religious community teams. However, when you see people eager to enter a church once again and to pray there, it makes all the effort worthwhile. When you see people whom you have never seen before come to church attracted to the faith, one realizes that, though we are sailing into the unknown, God never ceases to stir hearts.

The doors of your heart never closed, and I thank each of you for all the work you have done and continue to do. Let us continue to keep in mind those individuals and families who are still confined at home, by reaching out to them in a thousand-plus ways. Let us grow in our readiness to meet, to reach out and welcome, to accompany and to lead others to Jesus Christ. The People of God are thirsty.

May God guide us in standing together for the Mission, to be a Church close to people, and at the same time, a Church that reaches out with open arms and doors.  
On the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Christian Lépine". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

† Christian Lépine  
Archevêque de Montréal