

## PRESS RELEASE

### Catholic Church of Montreal issues a Holy Week message of Hope

Montreal, April 9, 2020 – Keenly aware that during this time of physical distancing and self-isolation, many might be feeling disconnected and on edge, the Catholic Church of Montreal has decided to send a message of solidarity and Christian hope to an anxious and fatigued province. The message will be published in the major local newspapers as of today until Easter Sunday.

To view the graphically designed message of hope, click [HERE](#).

“Whatever we can do to reach out to others is absolutely important,” states Most Reverend Christian Lépine, Archbishop of Montreal. “Although we are asked to keep physical distance from one another, and public gathering places (including our churches) are closed for the most part, our hearts and our Church community remain radically open to: faith, compassion and loving solidarity. A genuine spiritual communion unites us all,” the archbishop assures.

Referring to Pope Francis’ conviction that the Church consider itself a “field hospital,” Archbishop Lépine explains: “By this metaphor, the Pope insists that the Church not remain in splendid isolation, removed from the world, but must go beyond her preconceived borders and bring help wherever people are physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually in need.”

On March 27, reflecting on the Gospel account of Jesus calming the storm, the Pope observed that “the Lord asks us and, in the midst of our tempest, invites us to reawaken and put into practice that solidarity and hope capable of giving strength, support and meaning to these hours when everything seems to be floundering. The Lord awakens so as to reawaken and revive our Easter faith.”

For those over age 70 – and especially for seniors living in retirement facilities or nursing homes where stricter isolation measures have become necessary – it is easy for loneliness and a sense of abandonment to set in. However, the ongoing work of the Church’s pastoral home-care volunteers as well as of all those who reach out to the sick and homebound, offering encouragement and a listening ear, is invaluable. The diocese has set up a telephone helpline for anyone feeling anxious, fearful or in need of spiritual support at this time: 1-888-305-0994.

In addition, the archdiocese launched a new initiative this week, operating out of the residence of Mary Queen of the World Cathedral: “Priests listening.” To speak with a priest, you can now call 514-866-1661 daily from 1 p.m. and 3 for French-language calls and from 3 p.m. to 5 for English-language calls.

The Catholic Church in Montreal wishes all citizens a hope-filled beginning of spring and all Christians, a Blessed Triduum and joyous Easter.

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**For more information or an interview:**

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