



Archevêque de Montréal

Pastoral Letter:

ABUSE PREVENTION TRAINING – FOCUS ON VICTIMS OF ABUSE

October 13, 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ,

As part of our efforts to develop responsible ministry within the Archdiocese of Montreal, I made a commitment in November 2020, on behalf of our diocesan family, to implement the recommendations outlined in the Capriolo Report. This commitment entails shifting our focus towards the victims and eradicating abuse in all its forms within our Catholic Church of Montreal. In order to achieve this goal, many areas in our organization will have to undergo some transformation.

In May 2021, we announced both the appointment of an Ombudsman and the implementation of a comprehensive protocol for dealing with complaints pertaining to all forms of abuse. Although it is a minority who are responsible for committing these abuses, their impact on victims and our communities is deep. We need everyone's commitment in order to eliminate abuse in all its forms. We can, in fact, effectively protect children and vulnerable people in two ways:

- 1) By understanding abuse and learning how to respond to it through the training made available to us.
- 2) By creating environments in our parishes and other faith communities that foster the love and grace of Christ through our various ministries.

To that end, we have put training at the forefront of this transformation, given that it provides an opportunity for us to listen to others, to dialogue, to reflect, to understand and to engage in preventive action. The Focus on Victims of Abuse training sessions being offered are essential in order to raise our collective awareness and to get everyone involved in the practice of prevention in our communities.

From January to June of this year, **Phase I** of the training program was launched for diocesan staff and pastoral personnel, including priests, deacons, pastoral lay workers and parish catechetical leaders (PCL). This required formation was offered as a series of four sessions and allowed participants to complete the program together in groups.

Phase II of the training program is designed primarily for churchwardens, paid staff, catechetical volunteers (aged 18 and over) and Pastoral Home Care volunteers (who provide spiritual accompaniment for the sick and the elderly in their homes) serving in missions and parishes across the diocese. This training is essential

in our efforts to eliminate all forms of abuse and will be offered during a [one-day conference on a date of your choice: October 15 or December 10, 2022](#), hosted at various locations throughout the diocese.

Each conference will provide participants with a unique opportunity for group discussion and reflection in order to understand abuse better, to prevent it more effectively, and to help make our communities more welcoming and safer. Experts in the field will discuss various forms of abuse, both their short-term and often very long-term impact on victims, and the red flags that can signal situations of concern. The diocesan procedures we have put in place for managing complaints and supporting victims will also be discussed, as well as the roles of all the individuals involved in the process. It is far more helpful and effective to work towards preventing abuse than to have to deal with the impact of abuse after the fact.

I wish to thank everyone who took part in Phase I and those who will be participating in the Focus on Victims of Abuse Phase II conferences. Your involvement is very important.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ, let us pray together for success in our transformation and our solidarity, as we continue on this journey of truth, justice and pastoral renewal.

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

† Christian Lépine
Archbishop of Montreal