

September 24, 2020

Dear brother priests,  
Dear brothers and dear sisters,  
Dear members of our pastoral teams,

As we come to the end of September, we would have desired greatly that the pandemic was behind us, but it is still very present among us, made plain by the necessary health measures and by the threat of a second wave already underway.

Firstly, I would like to thank all of the priests, all of the members of our pastoral teams, the pastoral workers, directors of religious education, wardens, volunteers, all of you who tirelessly devoted yourselves first and foremost to reaching out to the People of God, to families, to those who are lonely, by the many means of communication. As soon as it was possible to reopen our church doors, you dove right in with courage to prepare a safe place that could welcome people who want to pray individually and that could allow for liturgical celebrations that nourish spiritual, family and community life.

The uncertainties about the pandemic, its magnitude, the age groups that were most affected, the development of a vaccine or of medical treatments are all a source of concern and could lead to moments of discouragement. Having entered now into the orange zone with its additional measures, we may feel disheartened and tempted, justifiably, to give up.

On the human level, we can first remind ourselves that the preventive measures, which include handwashing, wearing masks, and social distancing, work. On the spiritual level, we know that in staying close to the Lord, we find peace in the face of the unknown, patience in times of difficulty, and strength of soul to move forward.

The mission continues and we want to pursue it, but we cannot do it without the grace of Jesus Christ, without teamwork, and without solidarity with others. It is a mission in the Church, but also in the world. Currently, many people are worried to the point of feeling demoralized, and they need the support that faith provides.

We have the opportunity to witness to the presence of Jesus Christ, to his transformative power, to the calm strength that he gives to overcome the ordeal of this pandemic, and to emerge from of it having grown as an individual, as a family, as a Church, and as a society.

Let us continue our mission to serve by learning how to abandon ourselves to God more, by working at reaching and supporting individuals and families through the use

of every means that allows us to be present to them. Let us be inspired by the life of the great witnesses of the Bible and by the saints of history who learned to hold fast “as if seeing the one who is invisible” (cf. Heb 11:27).

We know that spiritual needs are essential needs, which call for essential services. By way of our open doors and our going out to others in society, let us be receptive and respond to the thirst for God that the Holy Spirit places in each heart.

In Christ Jesus,



+Christian Lépine  
Archevêque de Montréal