
3331, rue Sherbrooke Est Montréal QC H1W 1C5

MEDIA STATEMENT
for immediate release

Reconfinement for places of worship by limiting attendance at 25 or 50 people:
Protocols for Places of Worship Are Strictly Adhered To

Montreal, 22 September 2020 — Last April, a group of religious leaders was formed in Quebec, to contribute in a concerted manner to the collective efforts toward a safe deconfinement.

In this spirit, on 8 May 2020, these religious leaders wrote a letter to the Premier to present him a project for a protocol for deconfining places of worship. To this day, no acknowledgment of receipt was received for this letter.

Only on 28 May did a meeting take place with a group of public servants to examine the submitted protocols. Remarks and suggestions were made by the public servants to improve the protocols, and all of them were integrated in the protocols.

From 22 June 2020 onward, activities progressively resumed in places of worship across Quebec. Thousands of religious gatherings have since taken place.

Today, religious leaders are making public the latest version of these protocols, dated 4 August 2020. These protocols are strictly adhered to in all places of worship in Quebec. It is not uncommon for health care personnel attending a religious service to express their appreciation and to underline that we are doing more than is required.

As a result, to this day, and to our knowledge, no outbreak has been registered in our milieus. In a letter dated 21 September 2020, Montreal public health director, Dr. Mylène Drouin, states: *“There has been no outbreak signalled in Catholic places of worship in Montreal nor any outbreak in the places of worship of the other confessions.”* (Our translation)

For the last few weeks, the government has been announcing that reconfinement measures will be targeted and specifically adapted to different sectors of activity. Following the decision to

Source : Assemblée des évêques catholiques du Québec (AECQ)

Renseignements : Mgr Pierre Murray, C.S.S.

Assemblée des évêques catholiques du Québec

Téléphone : 514-914-0553

pmurray@evequescatholiques.quebec ; www.evequescatholiques.quebec

severely restrict activities in places of worship, announced on 20 September by the minister of health, many people have expressed their incomprehension, since no outbreak has been recorded and nothing justifies such measures.

In this context, religious leaders in Quebec ask the government to explain why it imposes such strict measures to activities in places of worship, while nothing justifies it. They reiterate their demands expressed yesterday: *"that government authorities reclassify places of worship in the category of concert halls, cinemas and theaters, which would allow us to continue welcoming a maximum of 250 people in our places of worship, instead of being limited to 25 or 50 people"*, while applying the protocols negotiated on 4 August 2020. They also demand that *"a frank and open channel of communication be established quickly between them and government authorities."*

In the name of the members of the Quebec Interreligious Roundtable¹,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Christian Rodembourg". The signature is written in a cursive style.

+ Christian Rodembourg
Bishop of Saint-Hyacinthe
President of the Quebec Assembly of Catholic Bishops

¹ **The Quebec Interreligious Roundtable** brings together representatives from the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, evangelical Churches, different Jewish traditions, different mosques, and the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism.

For Interviews:

- Bishop Christian Rodembourg, bishop of Saint-Hyacinthe and president of the AECQ. Contact : Mgr Pierre Murray, C.S.S., secretary general of the AECQ, 514-914-0553 | pmurray@eveques catholiques.quebec
- Gérald Cyprien CARDINAL Lacroix, archbishop of Quebec and vice-president of AECQ. Contact : Valérie Roberge-Dion, Catholic Church in Quebec City. 418-802-1214 | vrd@ecdq.org
- Bishop Christian Lépine, archbishop of Montreal and member of the AECQ Executive committee. Contact : Erica Jacinto, press secretary of the archbishop 514 709 8216 | ejacinto@diocesemontreal.org
- Iman Hassan Guillet, representing the Muslim community in Quebec, 514-699-7257 | hassan_guillet@hotmail.com
- Rabbi Reuben Poupko, representative of the Council of Montreal Rabbis, 514-898-4004 | reubenpoupko@gmail.com
- Dr Adriana Bara, PhD, director of the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism, 438-822-3141 | abara@oikoumene.ca
- Dr Denitsa Tsvetkova, PhD, Canadian Centre for Ecumenism, Coordinator of the Interreligious Forum for Peace, 514-937-9176 | denitsa@oikoumene.ca
- The Right Rev. Bruce Myers, Anglican bishop of Quebec, 418 570 4384 | bmyers@quebec.anglican.ca
- Dr. Louis Bourque, Director of the Association d'Église Baptistes Évangéliques au Québec, Member of the Executive of the Réseau Évangélique du Québec, 514-961-5052 | l.bourque@aebeq.qc.ca
- Mohamed Labidi, president of the Islamic Cultural Center of Quebec City, tel 418-998-3655 | labidi7@hotmail.com