

Places of Worship Reopen as from June 22

Montreal, June 17, 2020 – Following the authorization to hold indoor gatherings in public places respecting a maximum of 50 people, Quebec religious leaders announce the reopening of places of worship as from June 22. The reopening will proceed according to a joint protocol submitted earlier this month by participants in an Interfaith Roundtable and recently approved by public health.

This protocol provides strict rules that religious groups must respect to ensure the protection of the health of their members and prevent any spread of the virus during religious activities. Churches, synagogues, mosques and others are already busy applying them, each at its own pace.

The current crisis has given religious leaders from different backgrounds the opportunity to come together, to discuss and to speak with one voice to government authorities. The crisis has also revealed a profound lack of understanding of religions and the benefits they bring to hundreds of thousands of people in Quebec. It is regrettable that the authorisation to reopen places of worship was delayed by this lack of understanding.

In their respective religions, believers find meaning, moral and spiritual resources, and community support that contribute to their well-being. Many have suffered greatly from confinement, despite the measures adopted by several faith communities in an attempt to mitigate the effects of the lockdown. The reopening of places of worship will enable faith communities to resume services they consider “essential” and strengthen their efforts to participate actively in building a society based on justice, solidarity, and peace.

In light of these issues, religious leaders intend to continue the experience of the Interfaith Roundtable and make it a permanent forum for dialogue among religious groups, with government authorities, and with Quebec society in general.

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The Interfaith Roundtable brings together representatives from the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, the Evangelical Churches, different Jewish traditions, different mosques, and the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism, which works in interchurch and interfaith dialogue.

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