

Longueuil, Friday, March 27, 2020

COMMUNIQUE

To All Pastoral Personnel,
To Diocesan Centre Staff,

Let's ask ourselves, where would Jesus be today?

Yesterday, Premier François Legault's urgent message to those who are able to volunteer called on us to mobilize collectively to help those in need. The closure of businesses and companies has forced the layoff of an enormous number of workers who find themselves in a precarious, not to say dramatic, economic situation. These people are in addition to those who are already living in poverty, who no longer have access to mental health resources, who find themselves isolated because of their age, and so on.

If the enormous needs in terms of economic, social and psychological support confront us with the challenge of the security of the population and social peace, they also challenge our pastoral action.

Our bishop understood this challenge well, and from the very beginning of the crisis, he urged pastoral personnel "to remain in contact with all those to whom (pastoral) charity and spiritual comfort are essential in these difficult times, especially the most destitute, the bereaved and the lonely." Our churches and offices are closed, but our mission remains essential.

It is comforting to observe that many of our parishes did not wait for these calls to adjust their mutual aid services to the needs and constraints of the current situation or to go to lend a hand to community organizations. It is to this type of initiative that we are collectively called upon today as a matter of priority. **Quebec needs volunteers! Now is the "favourable moment" when the evangelical option for the poor must be expressed in the most radical way possible.**

While still respecting the health regulations required by the government, our pastoral teams must exercise primary, essential leadership in this time of crisis, for example :

- Mobilize our personnel, youth and able-bodied volunteers to support the collective effort to deal with the current crisis;

- Strengthen Parish or Pastoral Unit mutual aid committees ;
- Get involved in local organizations that help the most disadvantaged in our communities;
- Offer to help essential businesses (grocery stores, pharmacies) to deliver orders;
- Offer our help and availability to our 70 or over parishioners who are all self-isolated today.

The round tables in which we already participate, the Volunteer Action Centres of our municipalities or the Social Services Centres are useful references to guide us in choosing how to get involved.

The leadership team and the Diocesan Social Solidarity Office are available to assist you in this top priority. Feel free to call on us.

Committed to following Jesus, let's go to incarnate the Word that liberates and gives life!

Thank you for your commitment and solidarity.

Jean Roudy Denois, psj,
Vicar General

Daniel Pellerin,
Co-ordinator of the Diocesan Social Solidarity Office