



Official Communiqué 14

Decree on the Diocesan Order of Merit of the Diocese of Saint-Jean-Longueuil

To all the members of the People of God
Who are in Saint-Jean-Longueuil,

The *Saint-Jean Diocesan Order of Merit* was instituted in 1955 by Msgr. Gérard-Marie Coderre, the second bishop of the diocese. Since then, a number of people in the diocese have been admitted to the Diocesan Order of Merit and the existence of this form of recognition has never been called into question. However, the evolution of the socio-cultural and religious context requires periodic revisions. Thus it is that ever since the diocese was accorded the name of Diocese of Saint-Jean-Longueuil, the Diocesan Order of Merit has quite naturally been designated as the *Diocesan Order of Merit of the Diocese of Saint-Jean-Longueuil*. It will also be recalled that on June 17, 1994, Msgr. Bernard Hubert issued a decree stating the precise meaning of the recognition associated with admission to the ranks of the Diocesan Order of Merit, as well as a new definition of the criteria and procedures to be respected in order for a person or a group of persons to be admitted into this order. This decree was revised by Bishop Jacques Berthelet the eighth of September in the year two thousand and eight.

1. PURPOSE AND MEANING

The purpose of the institution of the *Diocesan Order of Merit of the Diocese of Saint-Jean-Longueuil* is to recognize a person or a group of persons who have distinguished themselves by a significant commitment within the church community or within civil society in a field that is accorded a particular importance in the eyes of the Church.

The person or group of persons whom the Bishop wishes to recognize for the quality of their commitment will be designated in different ways according to the conditions of their commitment :

- a) Persons or groups of persons who have distinguished themselves by their continual, intensive and faithful commitment within the church community or civil society in a field that is accorded a particular importance in the eyes of the Church may be admitted, provided certain conditions obtain, as *members of the Diocesan Order of Merit*;
- b) Persons or groups of persons who have distinguished themselves by the achievement of a particular project that has had a significant impact in the ecclesial

or social community in a field that is accorded a particular importance in the eyes of the Church may be granted, provided certain conditions obtain, a *citation of honour in the Diocesan Order of Merit*.

The recipients of a distinction of the Order will usually be men or women of the Catholic faith who are engaged in the ecclesial community or in civil society in accordance with their own vocation. It can happen, however, that a decoration of the Diocesan Order of Merit will be offered to a baptized person belonging to a Church or an ecclesial community other than Catholic, or perhaps to persons belonging to religious groups other than Christian, or not even having any religious affiliation, when, in the judgement of the Bishop, the contribution of these persons assumes a particularly important significance with regard to the values that our Church promotes in its desire to recognize and put into action the evangelical message.

In our Diocesan Church, the expression of our recognition of individual and collective commitments is part of that grand action of thanksgiving that has been a source of joy in the Church of Christ since its beginnings. In the Church, deeds and words of recognition are indeed sources of joy as much for their authors and witnesses as for those to whom they are directed. This is why, apart from the joy it brings, the conferring of a distinction to honour a contribution remarkable for its quality and its generosity is an encouragement to all members of the community to apply themselves ever more resolutely to the service of their brothers and sisters in the ecclesial community as well as in civil society.

2. CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION INTO THE DIOCESAN ORDER OF MERIT AND FOR THE GRANTING OF A CITATION OF HONOUR

The criteria to be applied in accepting a person or group of persons as *member of the Diocesan Order of Merit* or in granting a *citation of honour in the Order* to a person or group of persons will be the following :

- a) Any Catholic Christian or group of Catholic Christians may become a *member of the Diocesan Order of Merit* by reason of a continual, intensive and faithful commitment within the ecclesial community or within civil society in a field that is accorded a particular importance in the eyes of the Church.
- b) Any Catholic Christian or group of Christians may receive a *citation of honour in the Diocesan Order of Merit* by reason of the fulfillment of a particular project that has had a significant impact in the ecclesial or social environment in a field that is accorded a particular importance in the eyes of the Church.
- c) Any person or group of persons not belonging to the Catholic Church may, exceptionally, become a *member of the Diocesan Order of Merit* by reason of a continual, intensive and faithful commitment within the ecclesial or social community, when the contribution of this person or this group of persons is accorded a particularly important significance with regard to the values that our Church promotes in its desire to recognize and put into action the evangelical message.
- d) Any person or group of persons not belonging to the Catholic Church may, exceptionally, receive a *citation of honour in the Diocesan Order of Merit* by reason of the fulfillment of a particular project that has had a significant impact in the

ecclesial or social environment, when the contribution of this person or this group of persons is accorded a particularly important significance with regard to the values that our Church promotes in its desire to recognize and put into action the evangelical message.

- e) A person may be instituted as a *member of the Diocesan Order of Merit* or receive a *citation of honour in the Order* posthumously.

3. PROCEDURE FOR ADMISSION TO THE DIOCESAN ORDER OF MERIT AND FOR THE GRANTING OF A CITATION OF HONOUR IN THE ORDER

- a) Any individual or group in the diocese may recommend to the Bishop a person or a group of persons as candidate for admission as *member of the Diocesan Order of Merit* or for receipt of a *citation of honour in the Order* on condition that the procedures stipulated for this purpose are respected and on condition that the recommendation is approved by the nominee's pastor or immediate superior, or by a leader of the pastoral region concerned.
- b) The procedures to be followed for the recommendation of candidates for admission as *members of the Diocesan Order of Merit* or for granting a *citation of honour in the Order* are stipulated in a separate document and are accompanied by a form to be used for presentation of the recommendation. The completed form is to be addressed to the Bishop.
- c) Once he has received the form, the Bishop will entrust to a committee he has established the duty of studying the request and making their recommendation to him.
- d) The Bishop reserves to himself the right to designate, without awaiting recommendations, persons or groups of persons whom he will admit as *members of the Diocesan Order of Merit* or to whom he will award a *citation of honour in the Order*.
- e) The Bishop can place an annual limit on the number of persons admitted as *members of the Diocesan Order of Merit* or given a *citation of honour in the Order*.

4. MODALITIES OF ADMISSION OF CANDIDATES TO THE DIOCESAN ORDER OF MERIT AND OF GRANTING OF A CITATION OF HONOUR IN THE ORDER

- a) In the course of a public ceremony ordinarily held no more than once a year, the Bishop proceeds to *the solemn admission to the Diocesan Order of Merit* persons or groups of persons whose candidacies have been accepted by presenting them with a scroll bearing the name of the person or group of persons and the reasons for their admission to the Order. In the course of the same ceremony he receives the persons and groups of persons whose candidacies have been accepted for a *citation of honour in the Order* and likewise presents them with a scroll declaring the granting of this citation.
- b) In addition, the Bishop presents to the new members of the Order, with the scroll, a symbolic object expressing the recognition of the Diocesan Church and representing their *admission into the Diocesan Order of Merit*. A symbolic object is likewise given to persons or groups of persons who are named in a *citation of honour in the Order*.

- c) The name of the person or of the group concerned is inscribed in the Golden Book of the diocese and the list of these persons and these groups is kept in the archives along with copies of the scrolls given to the recipients.
- d) When the recipient is a member of the diocese, an inscription is written in an appropriate register in the home parish of the new *member of the Diocesan Order of Merit* or of the person who has received a *citation of honour in the Order*. A copy of the scroll that has been given to the recipients of the Order's distinction is kept in the records of the parish.
- e) In the weeks that follow the public ceremony of recognition, the names of the persons and groups honoured will be published in the Diocesan newspaper.

CONCLUSION

I trust that this manner of recognition which constitutes admission to the *Diocesan Order of Merit of the Diocese of Saint-Jean-Longueuil* and by granting of the *citation of honour in the Order* will permit us to achieve the twofold objective that it is meant to serve, on the one hand of opening our hearts in a real way to thanksgiving for the gifts granted to our Diocesan Church, and on the other of encouraging and supporting generous commitments to the service of the Gospel in the Church and in the world.

The present decree annuls and abrogates all dispositions and modalities contained in previous decrees relative to the Diocesan Order of Merit.

Written and given at Longueuil, the sixth of November in the year two thousand and thirteen.



† Lionel Gendron, p.s.s.
Bishop of Saint-Jean-Longueuil



Jean-Pierre Camerlain, v.é.
Chancellor