

Press release from AECQ: Cancellation of all public activities in Quebec churches



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Translated from its original version in French – Source AECQ

The Premier of Quebec has ordered the closure of all public gathering places. Given the extent of the danger, the urgency of the situation, and the solidarity required under such circumstances, the Executive of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Quebec is recommending, effective today, the suspension of all celebrations and public activities in the churches of Quebec.

Pastors are asked to contact families who have planned a baptism, funeral or wedding celebration to ask them to postpone the event.

We also appeal to all priests exercising ministry in Quebec to remain available to and show pastoral creativity in the way they accommodate parishioners who communicate with them by telephone asking for a private meeting or a home visit.

We ask priests and their pastoral team to remain attentive to the needs of those who are alone or sick, and to offer them spiritual solace, including Communion at home and the Sacrament of the Sick. During these visits, they must adhere to the practices recommended by public health officials.

Where possible, it is desirable that churches remain open but for private prayer and personal devotion only. We ask the faithful to appreciate that older priests will not be available for pastoral service during this period of voluntary confinement.

During this time of fear and uncertainty, we welcome Pope Francis' invitation "to rediscover and deepen the value of the communion that unites all the members of the Church." He also invites us to find solace in Christ, with whom we are united through prayer and spiritual communion in the Eucharist, a practice that is highly recommended when it is not possible to receive the Sacrament."

In the exceptional circumstances we are experiencing this Lent, we are invited to live this period of voluntary confinement and hardship recalling the forty days that Christ spent in the desert. When we fast, pray and mutually help one another, we remain united in Christ.

We join our prayer with that of all Catholics in Quebec, and we commend to God all the first responders working throughout the province taking care of us all. May the Virgin Mary, who is also our Mother, bring us comfort and support.

+ Christian Rodembourg
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