

**COVID-19
Recommendations for religious communities**

Montreal, March 24, 2020 – For over a week now, we have been collectively living in a time of uncertainty, due to the coronavirus pandemic. Many provinces have requested that all worship services and religious gatherings be suspended (Masses, Holy Week services, sacraments, funerals, meetings, etc.), and this seems to be the growing trend across dioceses.

Given the observed exponential contamination, it is crucial to put measures in place to slow and curb the epidemic. This includes self-isolation for travelers returning to Canada, cancellation of all non-essential activities, isolation at home for those aged 65 and over or at risk due to compromised immune systems, diabetes or underlying medical conditions.

To protect our neighbor, we must absolutely limit the spread of the virus by limiting external contacts. This also constitutes a call to protect the sanctity of life.

For this reason, the Canadian Religious Conference asks its members, all religious communities and institutes of consecrated life to go above and beyond applicable directives (diocesan, regional or provincial) and demonstrate strong leadership by undertaking the following measures, should they not yet be implemented:

- Close its residences to all non-essential outside visits, except for supplies and necessary medical care;
- Close its chapels, churches or other prayer spaces to the public, even if they are seldom used (a surface contaminated by an asymptomatic person can suffice to spread the virus and infect other people);
- Cease welcoming or authorizing the presence of priests from outside the community on its premises, for the Eucharist or other sacraments (daily Mass is available online at <https://saltandlighttv.org/mass/>);
- Implement, as much as possible, remote work for lay staff and take precautionary and hygienic measures for those staff members who must be on site due to the nature of their work.

In order to provide detailed information applicable especially to consecrated life living and worship spaces, the CRC released on its website [a series of recommendations written in collaboration with Dr. Valérie Julie Brousseau](#), surgeon (Oto-laryngology), with a degree in Research, Epidemiology and Public Health from Harvard Medical School. The aforementioned measures constitute responsible action for communities of consecrated life and for society.

The CRC thanks all its members for their collaboration and unites in prayer, in support of the sick and suffering, all medical staff, governments, and faith communities.

About CRC

The CRC is an association that brings together the leaders of 250 Catholic congregations of women and men religious in Canada. Its mission is to encourage its members in living fully their vocation of following Christ and to support them in their prophetic testimony of justice and peace in society and the Church.

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