

**PRESS RELEASE**

For immediate circulation

**GOD DOES NOT ABANDON US**  
**A message of solidarity to the communities**  
**affected by the shootings in Nova Scotia**

Montreal, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 – On Sunday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, Nova Scotia became the scene of the worst mass shooting of our country's history, with a toll of 22 victims and their shooter. Religious communities in Canada and all consecrated persons, though currently in confinement, unite in prayer from coast to coast for the victims and their grieving families of Portapique, Wentworth, Debert, Shubenacadie/Milford and Enfield.

The heartbreak in Nova Scotia adds a layer of horror to these challenging times facing our Canadian population, especially now those of the Maritimes, as uncertainty due to the pandemic remains before us.

The confinement prevents us from visiting our families, our friends, and our elderly who are isolated and perhaps even infected with the coronavirus. Many people are experiencing deep grief without being able to gather, due to closed churches and funeral homes.

Perhaps this tragedy makes us want to cry out to the sky, in the words of Psalm 22, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Where can God be in the midst of these times of sorrow?

Our faith tells us of a God who is near, not far from us. The Bible gives us glimpses of God as a pilgrim: God walking with the Hebrew people during their exodus, God exiled alongside them in Babylon, God revealed in a man – Jesus – to walk in Galilee and aid the sick and oppressed. Jesus, in death, experienced the depths of human suffering. Jesus Christ passed through death to unite us in his resurrection. This hope for life beyond death, no matter how mysterious, can see us through this difficult time. God is among us, crying and shouldering our grief, a beacon of hope.

Even though our solidarity seems reduced to small gestures, no matter how banal they may seem, let us remember that they are all ways to witness to the closeness and the love of God for our neighbours, our loved ones, and those we are not acquainted with. Making a phone call or using a web application to keep in touch with someone, staying home, making a charitable donation, buying local, volunteering time... These daily gestures can renew our relationships and remind us of our interdependence.

With trust and hope, we will soon enough feel the peace described in Psalm 121, “The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade at your right hand.”

### **About CRC**

The Canadian Religious Conference is a network that brings together the leaders of 250 Catholic congregations of women and men religious in Canada. The CRC’s mission is to encourage its members to live fully their vocation in following Christ and to support them in their prophetic witness to justice and peace in a Canadian context.

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