

May 20, 2020

François Legault
Premier of Quebec
National Assembly
Édifice Honoré-Mercier, 3^e étage
835, boul. René-Lévesque Est
Québec QC G1A 1B4

Mr. Legault,

I am writing this letter as a concerned Quebecer residing in the area of Greater Montreal. Of particular attention is the impact of the provisions and protocols enacted during this Covid-19 pandemic, which have severely curtailed both our individual and collective freedoms, as well as dangerously infringing upon our rights as citizens of this province.

At the onset of this crisis, due to the limited data available, the misinformation provided by international entities and the general confusion associated with the Novel Coronavirus, it was understandable that both the federal and provincial governments undertook efforts to protect the health, safety and well-being of their citizens from this deadly contagion. As such, the recommendation for all Quebecers to remain in their homes and for non-essential businesses and non-profit organizations to cease their operations for a 15-day period to “slow the spread” and/or “flatten the curve” of this foreign blight, seemed an appropriate measure in order to stop this contagion which has been exported from China into our borders.

As loyal citizens and without question, we complied with unwavering trust that our governmental authorities were acting in our best interests. Schools, businesses and all places of worship were closed down, and, as of the writing of this letter, it has been in excess of 8 weeks that we have been confined to our homes with limited mobility. Sadly, it now appears that our governments have misled its citizens. While the plan to close the country and the province was easily imposed and enforced, it seems obvious that there was no thought or plan given to exit the country and the province from the lockdown situation. Moreover, we are saddened to realize that churches and other religious groups were not included in either the strategic planning surrounding the eventual re-opening of the country, nor in the plans relating to the imposition of the current lockdown.

While the interests of churches and religious groups were apparently ignored by the governments in power, we have nonetheless been called upon to come to the aid of people in a tangible manner: providing food, clothing and financial help. We have willingly provided such help without regret or delay, within the means we have available. Sadly, it has become rather obvious that the concerns of public officials are narrowly focused to meeting only the physical needs of the public, which, while important, are not the only needs which people need to have met. Spiritual guidance and solace can serve to calm the fear stricken and anxious populace. Governments are ill-equipped to provide this type of guidance and solace, but churches and religious organizations are uniquely qualified to act in this capacity but their value has been ignored and denied by the government of this province. Consequently, not only have the governments (both federal and provincial) failed to consider the long-term economic devastation levelled on the nation’s economy but they have also neglected to examine the incalculable toll that this lockdown will have on the long-term Spiritual and Mental Health of the populace in the days, weeks, months and years to come.

Instead of seeking out and encouraging churches and religious organizations to fulfill their roles of counselors to a fearful population, the governments of this country deemed all faith-based institutions,

and religious organizations of all faiths as being “non-essential.” What an affront to these organizations as it is precisely in these events when spiritual guidance and succour are essentially needed by people! How can the Walmart, Costco, Rona and Home Depots of this country (just to mention a few), be considered as “essential”, whereas religious organizations, who exist to meet the holistic needs of the populace be deemed “non-essential” during a period of global crisis?

Article 3 of the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms: ***Every person is the possessor of the fundamental freedoms, including freedom of conscience, freedom of religion, freedom of opinion, freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association.*** Under the current protocols and regulations, these freedoms have been both curtailed and denied far longer than initially declared and, with no clear end in sight, it seems clear that denying these rights and freedoms will continue unless people start to speak up and clamor to have them fully restored.

We do not deny the presence or impact of COVID-19. With a heavy heart, we acknowledge the fact that over 3800 Quebecers have died as a result of this virus, the vast majority of which were registered right here in the area of Montreal. While this level of mortality is tragic and sobering, we cannot focus ourselves solely on the dead, but must also cast our attention on the living and their needs as they are called upon to continue living despite this tragedy. In light of this, we rigorously insist that our rights as citizens be immediately reinstated and that we can start assembling and operating fully as a religious organization. This will allow us and our organization, to resume our function as a force for healing at a time when this country is desperately in need of restoration. Governments are not equipped to deal with what is coming, but churches and other religious organizations certainly are. We can meet the needs of the populace and help them find the calm and peace to overcome the fear and worry that this crisis has provoked. As an organization, we are more than capable to resume our activities within the required safety and hygiene protocols, all the while respecting social distancing norms and making adjustments to protect the most vulnerable of our communities. While we were not provided with the option to make these changes to our methods of operation at the onset of the crisis, we can assuredly make these necessary changes and adaptions now. Moreover, the faster we can restart our activities, the quicker the benefits that can be felt in the lives of Quebecers. We believe that by consenting to our requests, the government would be demonstrating its good intentions and good faith towards the population that they have sworn to serve. Consequently, we implore that the Quebec government acts immediately to restore our rights and freedoms so that we can start working to meet the needs of the public which we are most capable to meet.

Sincerely,

SIGNATURE: _____

NAME (PRINT): _____

ADDRESS: _____

May 20, 2020

Right Honorable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
Parliament Hill, 80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Mr. Trudeau,

I am writing this letter as a concerned Canadian citizen residing in the province of Quebec. Of particular attention is the impact of the provisions and protocols enacted during this Covid-19 pandemic, which have severely curtailed both our individual and collective freedoms, as well as dangerously infringing upon our rights as citizens of the country which we have sworn to stand on guard for.

At the onset of this crisis, due to the limited data available, the misinformation provided by international entities and the general confusion associated with the Novel Coronavirus, it was understandable that both the federal and provincial governments undertook efforts to protect the health, safety and well-being of their citizens from this deadly contagion. As such, the recommendation for all Canadians to remain in their homes and for non-essential businesses and non-profit organizations to cease their operations for a 15-day period to “slow the spread” and/or “flatten the curve” of this foreign blight, seemed an appropriate measure in order to stop this contagion which has been exported from China into our borders.

As loyal citizens and without question, we complied with unwavering trust that our governmental authorities were acting in our best interests. Schools, businesses and all places of worship were closed down, and, as of the writing of this letter, it has been in excess of 8 weeks that we have been confined to our homes with limited mobility. Sadly, it now appears that our governments have misled its citizens. While the plan to close the country and the province was easily imposed and enforced, it seems obvious that there was no thought or plan given to exit the country and the province from the lockdown situation. Moreover, we are saddened to realize that churches and other religious groups were not included in either the strategic planning surrounding the eventual re-opening of the country, nor in the plans relating to the imposition of the current lockdown.

While the interests of churches and religious groups were apparently ignored by the governments in power, we have nonetheless been called upon to come to the aid of people in a tangible manner: providing food, clothing and financial help. We have willingly provided such help without regret or delay, within the means we have available. Sadly, it has become rather obvious that the concerns of public officials are narrowly focused to meeting only the physical needs of the public, which, while important, are not the only needs which people need to have met. Spiritual guidance and solace can serve to calm the fear stricken and anxious populace. Governments are ill-equipped to provide this type of guidance and solace, but churches and religious organizations are uniquely qualified to act in this capacity but their value has been ignored and denied by the government of this country. Consequently, not only have the governments failed to consider the long-term economic devastation levelled on the nation’s economy but they have also neglected to examine the incalculable toll that this lockdown will have on the long-term Spiritual and Mental Health of the populace in the days, weeks, months and years to come.

Instead of seeking out and encouraging churches and religious organizations to fulfill their roles of counselors to a fearful population, the governments of this country deemed all faith-based institutions, and religious organizations of all faiths as being “non-essential.” What an affront to these organizations as it is precisely in these events when spiritual guidance and succour are essentially needed by people!

How can the Walmart, Costco, Rona and Home Depots of this country (just to mention a few), be considered as “essential”, whereas religious organizations, who exist to meet the holistic needs of the populace be deemed “non-essential” during a period of global crisis?

Article 2 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects every Canadian citizen against any governmental law or regulation which undermines the following fundamental freedoms: **(a) freedom of conscience and religion; (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication; (c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and (d) freedom of association.** Under the current protocols and regulations, these freedoms have been both curtailed and denied far longer than initially declared and, with no clear end in sight, it seems clear that denying these rights and freedoms will continue unless people start to speak up and clamor to have them fully restored.

We do not deny the presence or impact of COVID-19. With a heavy heart, we acknowledge the fact that close to 6000 Canadians have died as a result of this virus, the majority of which were registered in Quebec, where we, as a Church are located. While this level of mortality is tragic and sobering, we cannot focus ourselves solely on the dead, but must also cast our attention on the living and their needs as they are called upon to continue living despite this tragedy. In light of this, we rigorously insist that our rights as citizens be immediately reinstated and that we can start assembling and operating fully as a religious organization. This will allow us and our organization, to resume our function as a force for healing at a time when this country is desperately in need of restoration. Governments are not equipped to deal with what is coming, but churches and other religious organizations certainly are. We can meet the needs of the populace and help them find the calm and peace to overcome the fear and worry that this crisis has provoked. As an organization, we are more than capable to resume our activities within the required safety and hygiene protocols, all the while respecting social distancing norms and making adjustments to protect the most vulnerable of our communities. While we were not provided with the option to make these changes to our methods of operation at the onset of the crisis, we can assuredly make these necessary changes and adaptions now. Moreover, the faster we can restart our activities, the quicker the benefits that can be felt in the lives of Canadians. We believe that by consenting to our requests, the government would be demonstrating its good intentions and good faith towards the population that they have sworn to serve. Consequently, we implore that the Canadian government acts immediately to restore our rights and freedoms so that we can start working to meet the needs of the public which we are most capable to meet.

Sincerely,

SIGNATURE: _____

NAME (PRINT): _____

ADDRESS: _____
