



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate distribution

Saint Joseph's Oratory announces that it is closed until further notice Daily Mass in French, celebrated without a congregation, will be made widely available

Montréal, March 17, 2020 – In order to comply with the new directives issued by the Prime Minister of Québec and by the Director of Public Health, the administration of Saint Joseph's Oratory announces, with regret, its complete closure until further notice. Thus, beginning on Wednesday, March 18 at 9 PM, pilgrims and visitors will no longer have access to the buildings.

On March 12 past, Saint Joseph's Oratory already declared the cancelling of all Masses and all concerts including its most anticipated event, that is, the novena to Saint Joseph.

"This is an extraordinary time, which requires extraordinary measures. We have a social responsibility towards each of our visitors as well as toward our personnel," maintained Father Claude Grou, CSC, Rector of Saint Joseph's Oratory. "Since the founding of the Oratory in 1904, we've had to close down on only two occasions; during the pandemic of the Spanish flu in 1918, and then for a short period of time during the ice storm of January 1998. We invoke the protection of Saint Joseph and Saint Brother André. We continue our prayer for all those who are ill, those who are near and dear to them, those who are self-isolating, their families, and all healthcare professionals."

BROADCAST OF THE DAILY MASS IN FRENCH

In order to minimize the impact on the pilgrims, the Congregation of Holy Cross will continue to celebrate a Mass in French, without a congregation, each morning at 8:30 AM. On Sundays, this Mass will be presided by Most Reverend Christian Lépine, Archbishop of Montréal. The daily Masses in French will be broadcast by Salt & Light Media and will be accessible on the Oratory's Internet site by 9:30 AM.

The staff of Pastoral Services remains available to offer spiritual support to those who feel a need. The Service of Pastoral Counselling, usually available at the Oratory, will now be conducted only by telephone during this period of closure. The online Gift Shop continues to operate.

This exceptional complete shut-down is in conformity with the suggested sanitary measures. It is meant to express our support for the demonstration of solidarity among Montrealers.

- 30 -

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