



## **MONSIGNOR PAUL-ANDRÉ DUROCHER**

By God's mercy and grace of the Holy See  
Archbishop of Gatineau

To all priests, deacons, and pastoral agents of the Diocese of Gatineau

Greeting and blessing in Christ

### **DECREE** **Concerning the celebration of civil unions**

**CONSIDERING** that, in the year 2005, the federal government adopted Bill c-38 on civil unions, that included a fundamental modification to the definition of marriage;

**CONSIDERING** that religious freedom when it comes to marriage is guaranteed by Article 367 of the Quebec Civil code<sup>1</sup>;

**CONSIDERING** that, during a plenary meeting of the Quebec Catholic bishops, they decided that it would be to their advantage to remain in the actual system by which the State allows civil effects to marriages celebrated in the Catholic Church;

**CONSIDERING** that the aforementioned civil effects are, according to Article 366 of the *Quebec Civil Code*, inseparable from the religious celebration of marriage according to the Canon and liturgical laws<sup>2</sup> in effect.

**CONSIDERING** that, those who, in the Catholic Church, are canonically entitled by their ordination and the required jurisdiction in 'assisting' marriages, - i.e. those who are entitled to ask the couple planning to get married to manifest their consent, and to do it in the name of the Church - can not as such but celebrate marriages that comply with Canon standards.

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<sup>1</sup> Civil Code article 367: No minister of the cult can be forced to celebrate a marriage against which there may be an impediment due to his religion and the discipline of the religious congregation to which he belongs.

<sup>2</sup> Civil Code article 366 : Are competent to celebrate marriages [...] ministers of the cult entitled to do so by the religious congregation to which they belong, as long as they reside in Quebec, and the jurisdiction in which they exercise their ministry is located wholly or in part in Quebec; that the existence, the rites, and the ceremonies of their faith be permanent, that they celebrate marriages in places conform to these rites or the rules prescribed by the Ministry of Justice, and they be authorized by the aforementioned ministry.

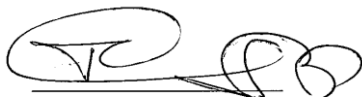
**CONSEQUENTLY**, by the present, I, Paul-André Durocher, Archbishop of Gatineau, remind and decree:

- 1.) Regarding priests and deacons (transitory or permanent) of the Diocese of Gatineau;
  - It is strictly forbidden for them to celebrate civil unions without a catholic marriage.
  
- 2.) Regarding duly mandated pastoral agents who, as citizens, could be authorized by the Government to celebrate civil unions;
  - It is also strictly forbidden to them for celebrate civil unions, due to the severe confusion it would create necessarily in reference to the doctrine and the discipline of the Catholic Church regarding marriage.

Presented in Gatineau, with our signature, the seal of the Diocese, and the countersignature of the chancellor, this twelfth day of the month of May of the year two thousand fifteen.



†Paul-André Durocher  
Archbishop of Gatineau



Pierre-Paul Périard  
Chancellor