



The English Speaking Catholic Council

Le conseil catholique d'expression anglaise

STATEMENT REGARDING THE SITUATION OF THE CATHOLIC TIMES

The Catholic Times newspaper has functioned as an important instrument of the Montreal Catholic community for many years, winning awards for the quality of its service. As is well known, it is facing closure and the English Speaking Catholic Council has taken note of the concern that many members of the community have expressed regarding the need for English Catholic media in Montreal. Without wanting to enter into a discussion regarding the internal workings of the newspaper, or of its relationship with its sources of funding, the ESCC would like to express the following concerns.

The Second Vatican Council made the following statement in its Decree on the Instruments of Social Communication:

A responsible press should be encouraged. If, however, one really wants to form readers in a truly Christian spirit, an authentically Catholic press ought to be established and supported. Such a press, whether it be established and directed by the ecclesiastical authorities or by individual Catholics, would have for its manifest purpose to form, to consolidate and to promote a public opinion in conformity with the natural law and with Catholic doctrines and directives. It would also publish news of the Church's life and informed comment on it. The faithful should be reminded of the need to read and circulate the Catholic press if they are to judge all events from a Christian standpoint.

The ESCC wholly supports this position taken by the universal Catholic Church.

We live in an age where there is a great deal of information readily available, but less and less informed analysis of that news and information. We wish to see an authentically Catholic press that acts to inform the public opinion of Catholics so that, as they engage with the society around them, the Christian standpoint can contribute to the building of that society.

Whether this service will continue to be performed by the Catholic Times or by some other means is not the issue. It is our hope, however, that in addition to the official sources of information from the institutional Church, there will also be a Catholic voice that is faithful to the Catholic magisterium and tradition but with an independent management structure. As was stated in the above quotation from Vatican II, both kinds of structure are worthy. Given how every institution in our culture is currently being challenged, not just the Catholic Church, we

consider that the synergy shown by both kinds of Catholic press working together would enhance the credibility of our message.

In the absence of an instrument of social communication such as a Catholic newspaper, it will be harder for the English Catholic community to maintain its cohesion and unity of purpose. Our public voice will also be diminished. We call upon the various leaders of the Montreal English Catholic community, whether clerical or lay, to work together to discern how an authentically Catholic press can continue to be present at the service of our people and our Church. The English Speaking Catholic Council stands ready to do its part in this dialogue.

Adopted unanimously by the Board of Directors of the English Speaking Catholic Council,
Montreal, Quebec, November 24, 2010

