

## **First annual Open Churches Day in Québec: more than 2,000 people accept the invitation!**

**Montréal, June 29, 2012** – Under the theme “On June 3, you’re invited!,” 14 places of worship in Montréal welcomed more than 2,000 visitors curious to discover them.

In accepting an invitation from the Belgium-based Open Churches Foundation, the initiating organization, to join in this annual event, the Conseil du patrimoine religieux du Québec (CPRQ) sought to help increase accessibility for a greater number of places of worship and to raise public awareness of the major issue of the survival of Montréal’s religious heritage, all while making it possible to reach a wider audience.

Montréal alone is home to some 500 places of worship (churches, chapels, temples and synagogues). They account for 20% of Québec’s 2,750 listed buildings erected before 1975. Montréal’s religious buildings are an outstanding part of the city’s heritage, renowned for their architectural value, historic role, symbolic nature and the place they have held in the history and development of surrounding communities. They are also home to artistic treasures: paintings, sculptures, furniture, stained glass, silverwork and pipe organs created by Québec’s finest artisans. Lastly, they have urban-planning value, as landmarks and gathering places that have structured neighbourhoods across the city.

This activity would not have been possible without the huge generosity of the 14 partner places of worship that agreed to open their doors and enable people living nearby, as well as visitors to the neighbourhoods, to discover the treasures they are guarding. They were enthusiastic in welcoming those who accepted the invitation, conveying their great affection for these heritage buildings with their extraordinary beauty and histories that are often overlooked.

The remarkable success of the event has encouraged us to repeat the experience next year, when we will be inviting our partners all across Québec to join this movement, now well established. We shall gather again on Sunday, June 2, 2013!

For more information on our activities, please regularly visit the home page of the CPRQ website, [www.patrimoine-religieux.qc.ca](http://www.patrimoine-religieux.qc.ca).

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