

# Two Antonian nuns die of COVID-19 in Quebec

Two Antonian nuns from Chicoutimi, Que., have died of COVID-19.

Sister Bertha Laforest died April 10 and Sister Yvette Rivard died on April 15. The superior general of the Antonian Sisters of Mary, Sister Ginette Laurendeau, confirmed the deaths.

Sister Laurendeau herself is in self-isolation because she has tested positive for COVID-19.

“For now, I’m fine. I’m doing exercises while doing this interview,” she said.

The Antonian Sisters of Mary, founded in Chicoutimi 115 years ago, then mobilized to isolate the 45 nuns who reside at its Chicoutimi monastery to protect their well-being.

Two social workers have been accompanying the Antonians, Sister Laurendeau said. Staff members, who were on preventive withdrawal at first, have now returned to the infirmary.

“But you can feel the fear,” Sister Laurendeau said.



**Bishop Rene Guay**

Bishop Rene Guay of Chicoutimi said the nuns are a big part of the community.

“For the people here, the Antonian Sisters are our big sisters,” Bishop Guay

said. "The priests, the whole diocesan community, the people of our region whom they served in their various commitments, we owe them all so much. If we're going through this mourning with such difficulty, it's because each of these sisters has a history with the people."

Bishop Guay said when he was a young priest, he worked with Sister Bertha Laforest in a local parish.

He said he is in regular contact with Sister Laurendeau, the superior-general.