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## THANK YOU!

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With all my heart I thank the population for the extraordinary reception it gave me, especially on January 9, the day of my episcopal ordination. My friends from Beauce County, P.Q., and Québec City were delighted with the marks of affection and goodness shown the new bishop. Thank you to all who made such an event possible; last Sunday, in my closing address, I wanted to forget no one.

Allow me today to stress the wonderful work of the local media. Here are a few examples : radio station CJEM-CKMV did a live broadcast of the ceremony; the weekly Le Madawaska devoted 14 pages of news to the event, in last Wednesday's edition; the Edmundston community cable network pre-recorded the entire ceremony for later broadcast; Radio-Canada had a high-quality news item on Monday, January 10; the Grand Falls, Edmundston, St. John and Portland, Maine newspapers paid special attention to this event. The newspaper L'Acadie Nouvelle had several articles on the new bishop. Do they not deserve our gratitude and admiration? "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see! Blessed are the ears that hear what you have heard!" Congratulations to the mass media for having made this event accessible to so many.

### FIRST CONTACTS

I am looking forward to get to know all of you, whether young or old. This week's meetings have been very revealing. First, after the ordination, I was able to meet many of you who attended the celebration. I must point out the outstanding visit to the Edmundston Regional Hospital; a friend's visit, but also a true pilgrimage of faith, hope and goodness manifested by the patients and their families and friends. Congratulations to the hospital and nursing staff as well as to the volunteers and the administration. I plan on going back again!

An important visit to the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament: they are only ten, but day and night they remind us of the service of praise and petition which the people of God must provide. The chapel was filled with affiliated members and associates, friends who carry all of us in their prayers. I also visited the fourteen sisters of the Filles de Marie de l'Assomption who are involved in teaching, in Edmundston, as well as in pastoral work, Third World Awareness programmes, education in the faith, and service to senior citizens.

Finally, the unforgettable visit to the Restigouche parishes: Saint-Jean-Baptiste, Kedgwick, Saint-Martin, Saint-Quentin. Last November I had been scheduled to give the 12-day grand mission on the theme of Baptism, but my episcopal appointment somewhat altered the timetable of my activities! What a joy it was for me to find myself in the midst of such sympathetic and generous people as these.

### CONSULTATION

Following my episcopal ordination I forwarded to all the priests and sisters as well as to those entrusted with pastoral work at the diocesan and parish levels, a questionnaire composed of six items. Everyone is invited to answer it. Very simply and in a spirit of solidarity, let me know about your expectations regarding your bishop, what you would consider as being the pastoral priorities for the coming years, keeping in mind the recommendations of the Diocesan Synod (1987-1990), what diocesan services we should ensure, and what projects we should promote at the parish and deanery levels. Tell me also who you would recommend as vicar

general, episcopal vicar for pastoral affairs, and diocesan procurator. How could we mark the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of our diocese? If possible, please send me your suggestions and recommendations before April 1, 1994. The provisional episcopal committee that I have appointed will take note of these letters and will help me in the decisions to be made. The committee members are Sister Berthe Lavoie, chancellor; Mme. Irma Morin, procurator; Father Almer Levasseur, respondent for pastoral work for the Edmundston, Upper Madawaska and Madawaska Centre deaneries; Father Roger Dionne, respondent for pastoral work for the Grand Falls, Southern Victoria, and Restigouche deaneries; Father Bernard Cantin who continues until June in his charge of episcopal vicar for pastoral affairs; Sister Geraldine Brotherton, F.M.A.; and Mr. Gilles Morin, of the Diocesan Services.

My dear friends, let us together and in a spirit of thanksgiving, continue to be bearers of the Gospel of the Lord. Let us remain united with the 40 missionaries from the Diocese of Edmundston who throughout the world contribute to the task of evangelisation. Let us remain faithful to our baptismal commitments: We are beloved of God.

Have a good week!

*+ François Thibodeau ym*

+ François Thibodeau, C.J.M.  
Bishop of Edmundston

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