
Zealously



As the priests of our Church are preparing for a spiritual assembly to be held May 9 to 12 at Ste-Anne-de-la-Pocatière, I solicit your prayers for them, that this get-together be one of communion, prayer, and sharing. May we become ever more holy, more united in a common faith in the Living, Risen Christ, more steadfast in the hope of a happy future for the Church of Edmundston, and more zealous and constant in charity. Allow me to continue quoting from the letter I wrote to our priests on February 28.

ZEALOUSLY

"Caught up in the idea of evangelisation, rooted in prayer, we shall cheerfully pursue our daily task with renewed joy and heart-felt eagerness. I have no doubt that the priestly service is demanding; its new forms require further detailing, but the evangeliser/prayer will always have a special place in the midst of the Church-Communion, the place of service and this, after the example of Jesus himself who came to serve and not to be served.

On the even of our diocese's fiftieth anniversary, the example set by our predecessors who have built this young Church of Edmundston can stimulate us into being day after day heralds of joy. I recall especially my predecessors Bishop Marie-Antoine Roy, O.F.M., Bishop J.-Romeo Gagnon, Bishop Fernand Lacroix, C.J.M., and Bishop Gerard Dionne. I remember also the generous priests who gave their lives for Jesus, in this Church. The witness of priests who are happy about their vocation and mission, happy to serve the people of today in a service of evangelisation, prayer, and sanctification becomes, I am sure, the seed of future vocations. On the other hand, alas, a counter-witness can stifle any attempt to raise vocations or respond to vocation awareness.

PRAY THE MASTER

In my first address as fifth bishop of Edmundston, I told you, 'Priority will have to be given to praying the Lord to send workers to his harvest, shepherds after his own heart, to our parishes and homes, and places of work and of recreation, men and women religious, pastoral agents, Christian leaders, so that each community continue to be vibrant, devoted, and missionary.'

I am sure of this: The Lord does not cease calling to his harvest people from our midst. we need to prepare the way for the Lord, discern his word, and soften our hearts. There are numerous voices, today: can we listen and discern those of God? Our Church of Edmundston has experienced an exceptional vocational fruitfulness. In small villages as well as bigger towns, the Lord calls the young and the not-so-young. We shall have to journey with several young people, get onto their wave length, tune in the same Lord who follows untrodden paths. [...] In the months that follow, we will have to implement a strong vocational pastoral ministry. And this we shall do together, in a spirit of constant prayer for this intention. The very life of the people of God depends on this.

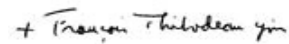
PASTORAL ORIENTATIONS

Every day, the diocesan consultation brings more specific expectations regarding pastoral attitudes which I must ensure, as well as regarding action and decisions to be taken. Along with the provisional episcopal committee, I make an in-depth study of each response received. And with the help of the diocesan councils and services we shall specify - in the wake of the 1987-1990 Diocesan Synod - the priorities that must be studied and implemented first. The Holy Spirit has spoken and continues to speak to our Church: may this Word inspire each pastoral decision we have to make regarding our respective communities."

WISHES

To our young people celebrating the Sacrament of confirmation at this time I wish the power of the Holy Spirit, courage to live as witnesses to Christ, and to build up the Church with their sisters and brothers. To the Clair Council Knights of Columbus celebrating the council's fortieth anniversary I wish them faithfulness and perseverance: may they continue to carry out the mission which was inaugurated at their baptism and confirmation. To those graduates of the École de la Foi, I wish that the courses they took renew the expression of their faith, and that they become more and more, day after day, workers for the Gospel. And to our young teen 'missionaries' who are in Mexico for a few weeks, may their sharing with their less fortunate brothers and sisters become seeds of solidarity and communion.

Have a good week!



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

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