
APPOINTMENTS



On June 9 I announced the composition of the Episcopal Council: Father Roger Dionne, Vicar General and pastor for a second term of Assumption Parish, Grand Falls, Father Napoléon Michaud, pastor of St-Basile, appointed Diocesan Bursar [Procurator], Sister Berthe Lavoie, R.E.J., re-appointed Chancellor of the Edmundston Diocese, and Sister Claudette Ruest, S.M., appointed coordinator of the diocesan pastoral ministry. I also announced that the services of Father Armand Chouinard, C.J.M., had been retained for overseeing the activities of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the founding of our diocese, i.e., for the period 15 September 1994-15 August 1995.

SABBATICAL LEAVE

Today I announce a few more appointments regarding the redistribution of our priests. But first, I willingly grant sabbatical leave for health reasons, upgrading, or well-deserved rest to the following confrères: to Msgr. Eymard Desjardins who for over 40 years has laboured in the Cathedral Parish in Edmundston, to Fr. George Fournier who has been pastor of St-Hilaire these past twenty years, and to Fr. Félix Poitras who has been pastor of Ste-Anne or fifteen years. May these few weeks help them recuperate! May they be granted prayerful and serene moments of recuperative rest. May they then continue to exercise their priestly ministry in other ways, for the upbuilding of the Church of Edmundston.

WORKING TOGETHER AT EVANGELISATION

Following the consultations held throughout the diocese in January, I received several suggestions and recommendations. With the Episcopal Council and the priests together, I studied them carefully. A working paper was drawn up for a fair and farsighted distribution of priestly personnel among our 33 parishes, in order to meet the pastoral needs of the 60,000 Catholics of the diocese. With the aid of local parish councils and deanery level discussions, this study will have to be continued, if we are to have a harmonious pastoral apportionment of priests, religious, and lay people who together share in the evangelisation task of establishing the Kingdom of Jesus here on earth. We need to go beyond usual parish boundaries, in order to allow the priests to work closer together, share pastoral tasks among themselves, and help one another, parish to parish. Within the same deanery, a number of services could be shared in common: youth ministry, catechetics, social ministry, preparation to Christian Initiation, Baptism and Marriage preparation, etc. In this interparochial work, there is room for priests, religious, and lay people. It is therefore appropriate that these tasks be officially defined by a particular deanery or by the diocesan coordinator of pastoral ministry, and that they be acknowledged and supported by the entire deanery. It will become more and more important to stress inter-parish and even inter-zone collaboration, in order to better respond to the needs of the people of God, to indicate that the Church is open and accessible to the population as a whole, and to allow the different communities to get together and thus reveal their vigour.

COLLABORATING IN THE FULLNESS OF THE BISHOP'S MINISTRY

In communicating to you the different changes brought about regarding the priest personnel of our diocese, I want to stress the undaunting faith of our priests, their wonderful availability, and their generosity. I have been

deeply touched. It isn't easy to leave a particular ministry or community after having invested so much work and sacrifice; I myself experienced this, recently, when the Holy Father asked me to take up an entirely new direction, last October... Even after four years, it is painful to leave a job that one loves; this, too, I experienced, since I was in my fourth year as provincial superior of the Eudist Fathers when I was appointed to be your bishop. Dear brother priests, I hold you in high esteem and I know that your respective communities will be saddened to see you go, but I also know that they will understand that you will be carrying them in your heart and prayers, and that it is for the good of the diocese that these changes are being made. The priestly ministry is lived out in a manner adapted to the present situation. Due to a decrease in their number, it would be tempting to ask them always more, and to add to the responsibilities they already have, but we soon realise that this solution is not a good one. It is necessary that the priestly ministry be workable and spiritually uplifting. For this, we must therefore organise it differently, by stressing, for instance, inter-parish and even inter-deanery collaboration, and by supporting a diversity of ministries. It would be tempting, also, to assign all the priests to a parish-type ministry, which is the prevailing one. But the priests' collegial vocation is to collaborate in the fullness of the ministry of one's bishop, who has been given charge of the Church in its most varied situations, missions, services, and emergencies. Hence the importance of continuing to study and implement together consolidation of our pastoral ministry.

PASTORS, ASSISTANTS, AND CHAPLAINS

For the time being there is to be no change in the Victoria and the Restigouche Deaneries, except for Father Narcisse Gagnon's going to St-Quentin: after having served for ten years as pastor of St-Léonard-Parent, he will be retiring (close on to 80 years of age) to the rectory at St-Quentin [where Msgr. Boucher is pastor]. In the Edmundston Deanery, Fr. Claude Clavet is appointed pastor of St-Joseph Parish; he has been pastor at Clair these last twelve years. Fr. Rino Thériault is appointed pastor of St-Jacques Parish; he has been in St-André for the last ten years. Newly-ordained Fr. Jeff Doucette has been appointed diocesan director of vocations and assistant at Notre-Dame-des-Sept-Douleurs Parish [Edmundston East], two days per week. Father Laurent Nadeau is appointed chaplain of the Edmundston Regional Hospital; he has been pastor of St-Joseph Parish [St-Joseph] for six years; his residence will be at Notre-Dame-des-Sept-Douleurs. I appoint Fr. Jean-Guy Lachance [C.J.M.] director of the École de la Foi [School of Faith, French Sector] and director of pastoral ministry at St-Louis-Maillet University Centre. In the Upper Madawaska Deanery, Fr. Alfred Ouellet is appointed pastor of Clair; he has been pastor in Drummond for six years. Father Jacques Thériault is appointed pastor of the parish of St-Hilaire; he was chaplain at the Cité des Jeunes [Regional High School, Edmundston] and helped at the Cathedral for more than ten years, and occasional ministry for two years.

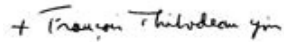
In the Grand Falls Deanery, Fr. Gaëtan Côté is appointed pastor of Ste-Anne Parish; he has been in St-Jacques since 1990. Father Armand Plourde is appointed to St-Léonard-Parent while ensuring the eucharistic ministry at Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes; after having worked nine years in Kedgwick, he has had to slow down for health reasons. With the approval of his provincial superior, Fr. Renaud Côté [C.J.M.] continues as pastor of the parish of St-Léonard-Ville; Fr. Robert Desjardins, C.J.M., will live with him at the rectory. Father Jacques Gauvreau is appointed pastor of St-André; after having been pastor of St-François for ten years, he ministered as a supply-priest for two years. Father William Rice is appointed pastor of Drummond; he has been chaplain of the Regional Hospital, Edmundston, for seven years.

I remind all that a pastor's term will not exceed six years and will be renewable once according to an evaluation of the diocesan situation. I have asked that each appointee make his profession of faith and take the oaths required by Canon Law, and to enter into their charge during the month of August. Let me add that one of our two seminarians will be interning, this year: Mr. Gaëtan Bernier will be at Assumption Parish. Regarding Mr. Curtis Sappier, a decision will be eventually made regarding his studies.

DIOCESAN SERVICES

In the next few months the diocesan resource personnel list will be completed according to resources and stated priorities. Father Michel Vallée returns to Québec to further his studies; Mrs. Manon Ruest-Bourgoin is named director of Youth Ministry. Sister Gemma Côté is taking sabbatical leave; Father Armand Chouinard [C.J.M.] will be in charge of liturgy during this our anniversary year, and Bishop Dionne will keep contact with our missionaries. Sister Constance Gervais, [S.M.], and Mr. Gilles Morin will continue with their catechetical work. Communications will be under the responsibility of Mr. Gilles Morin assisted by Fr. Lewis Long and Fr. Armand Plourde. The French Sector of the School of Faith will be under the direction of Fr. Jean-Guy Lachance, C.J.M., while the English Sector will be under the direction of Fr. Leo Grégoire, [I.V.D.]. Sister Géraldine Brotherton, [F.M.A.] will continue her work at the Spirituality Centre. Special attention will be paid to family ministry and social justice ministry, as well as to the animation of deaneries and the spiritual renewal of members of parish committees. Since a vocation ministry is urgently needed, it is important that the entire diocesan Church be involved in it, in a spirit of hope and optimism.

Have a good week!



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

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