
Rwanda



You have learned through the mass media about the intolerable situation existing in Rwanda, so I humbly beg of you two gestures of solidarity: prayer and almsgiving. To this end I have asked the pastors of our parishes to set aside one of the Sundays in September, specifically the fourth or the eleventh, in order to deeply pray for our Rwandan brothers and sisters who are faced with innumerable difficulties. I have also asked that a special offering be taken up for the people of Rwanda... The amounts received at the Diocesan Centre will be forwarded immediately to Rwanda through the agency of Development and Peace. Thank you, dear brothers and sisters of the Diocese, for your ever generous response; may the Lord who gratifies us with so much bounty bless our efforts to further more justice and love in Rwanda.

SCHOOL OF FAITH

On Saturday, September 10, the French section of the School Of Faith [École de la Foi], directed by Fr. Jean-Guy Lachance, C.J.M. will inaugurate its tenth year, while the English section directed by Fr. Leo Grégoire, I.V.D. will undertake its eighth year. Since it was founded in 1985, this indispensable School has had over 1890 registrations: a most impressive number. This means that a multitude of lay persons in this diocese have taken to heart the deepening of the faith they received at Baptism as well as a better understanding of Holy Scripture according to our Church's tradition, enlightened by the most recent research. Through the eight week-ends organised by the School of Faith, it is a great grace to be able to discover more and more with one's brothers and sisters the marvels which the Lord has never ceased to accomplish among His people and continues to do so today.... [The School of Faith] must be experienced!

ANOTHER FIRST!

From August 25 to 30 I shall have to opportunity to attend my first meeting of the Canadian Bishops Conference. The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCC) groups 70 diocesan bishops, 20 auxiliary bishops, and 34 bishops emeritus; there are 12 dioceses in the Atlantic region, four of which (Moncton, Bathurst, Saint John and Edmundston) are in New Brunswick. There are 19 dioceses in Québec, 14 in Ontario and 20 in the Western provinces. Founded in 1943, the CCCC is especially involved in matters of regional, national, and international scope as, for example, ecumenism, liturgy, Christian education, human rights, social justice in Canada and the Third World, respect for life, synods, relations with the Holy See and with other bishops conferences.

I am pleased to note that those on charge of the Conference invited a priest from the Atlantic region as observer, and that their choice was one of our own, Father Roger Dionne, vicar general and pastor of Assumption Parish, Grand Falls; we congratulate him on this sign of trust and solidarity. The meeting's agenda focuses on the consecrated life, the sacrament of Confirmation, the new Catechism of the Catholic Church, euthanasia, and respect for life. Reports from the different national episcopal commissions and other working groups are also received. As I have just been appointed to the Episcopal Commission on Social Communications, I shall attend this commission's meeting on August 27, where there will be question of the Canadian Foundation of Religious Video, as well as contacts to be maintained with the national and international Catholic press.

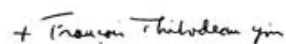
To round off this week in Ottawa, I shall meet with the Atlantic Region bishops, August 31 and September 1. The main topic will deal with the formation of future priests in our respective dioceses. This is a most important question, the future of the people of God depends on it. Assured that the Lord will continue to raise up Pastors after His own Heart, it is incumbent on us to establish a daring and vigorous vocation ministry. It is within the family that the young person learns to become a disciple of Jesus and serve his brothers and sisters; it is within the family that the young person experiences love, sharing, tenderness, and forgiveness. The spiritual experience of parents is the starting point of children's spiritual experience, of their sense of marvel before the greatness of God, of their happiness at following Him. During these days I place great stock on your prayers; be assured of mine on your behalf.

DAY OF PRAYER

With the above in mind I am pleased to invite you to the Day of Prayer to be held at the Diocesan Centre on Thursday, September 8, from 8:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M. Since I must be in Ottawa for the Canadian Bishops' meeting on the first Thursday of September, I have postponed the Day of Prayer one week.

By inaugurating this new 1994-1995 pastoral year with a day of prayer, we have a great opportunity for thanksgiving and petition on behalf of the Church of Edmundston.

Have a good week!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "François Thibodeau".

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

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