
VISIT TO DEANERIES



The thirty-three parishes of the Edmundston diocese are grouped into five pastoral zones [deaneries]: Upper Madawaska, Edmundston, Grand Falls, Restigouche, and Southern Victoria. It was my intention, at the beginning of the 1994-1995 pastoral year to visit all the pastors and pastoral agents: these meetings took place as follows: Monday, September 12, at Clair; Tuesday, September 13, at Edmundston; Wednesday, September 14, at St-Léonard; Sunday, September 18, at Perth-Andover; and Monday, September 19, at Kedgwick. On this visitation I was accompanied by Sister Claudette Ruest, Diocesan Coordinator of Pastoral Affairs. The meetings opened with prayer and sharing on three passages from Holy Scripture dealing with the sharing of pastoral tasks (Exodus 18:13-27), our cooperation with God (1 Corinthians 3:9-17), and the mission handed down to us by the Lord (Matthew 28:16-20). There were five items on the agenda: the 1991-1994 pastoral priority and those for 1995-1998, activities pertaining to the fiftieth anniversary of our diocese, the nature and mission of parish pastoral councils, the mode of functioning and programme of pastoral zones [deaneries], and consultation on the celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation. Besides allowing for direct contact with those in charge of parishes, these meetings are grace-filled moments, and they allow for a better dissemination of recent information and for quicker responses to questions raised.

CHARISMATIC RENEWAL CONGRESS

The first Diocesan Congress of the Charismatic Renewal will take place September 24-25 at the Cité des Jeunes [regional high school] in Edmundston. The congress theme is *His Love Is from Age to Age*. Mrs. Rachel Plourde, diocesan president of the Charismatic Renewal is very confident that there will be many people joining together in deep prayer and gratitude to the Holy Spirit. I have wonderful memories of the time I spent with the young people as I celebrated with them the sacrament that gives us the marvellous gifts of the Holy Spirit: Confirmation. May this congress rekindle in us the grace we once received. We must not worry about our incapacity to pray: at the heart of our prayerful concern and expectation, the Holy Spirit has already cleared a path.

A PROMISING MEETING

On Saturday October 1 the Association of Religious of the Diocese of Edmundston will hold a workshop facilitated by Sister Odette Lavallée, R.H.S.J., at the Hotel-Dieu of St-Basile. The workshop will be on questions of conscience and moral competence: euthanasia, interruption of treatments, proportional use of therapeutic methods, relief of pain, and the four great principles of clinical ethics. Between euthanasia and therapeutic tenacity, there is the patient and his or her story...

LA VIE MONTANTE

A Christian association of retired persons, *Vie montante* ['Life Ascending'] promotes spirituality, apostolate, and friendship among our seniors. This organisation exists in twenty dioceses. In the association's last bulletin was the following declaration of the congress held in June: 'We, members of Vie montante, in the name of our hoping, Christian faith, say No to a depressive society, No to giving up in the face of the actual and future situation. We want

to activate the confidence we have in order to work for a more human, more solidary, happier, more just, and more undertaking society, a preview of the Reign of God...' And the declaration ended with these words addressed to the younger generation: "We passed through it, and so will you. Follow your path, as long as it is ascending. What you are is God's gift to you; what you make of yourself is your gift to God."

THE CAIRO CONFERENCE

We heard through the media of the important conference that took place in Cairo, from September 5 to 11, on population and development. I want to note that the Canadian bishops made a declaration on the topic. Aware of the rapid demographic growth in certain parts of the world, and of the reverse situation in several countries of the northern hemisphere - Canada included - the bishops first noted the internationally-recognised right of every couple to freely decide in a responsible manner the number of children each couple wants as well as the spacing between births. Governments therefore have no right to decree abortion, sterilisation or contraceptive measures. Moreover, the bishops assert that a couple's real responsibility must take note of the several factors: the internal capacity of persons within a family, regarding health and material resources; the demographic reality of the country where the couple resides, and the global demographic context. Such a process of discernment will be bolstered by the couple's ethical and religious convictions as well as on the moral implications and methods of family planning that are being considered.

Have a good week!

+ François Thibodeau ym

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« From A Bishop's Journal » (035) (21 September 1994)