

---

## SPECIAL COMMISSIONS

---



On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of our Diocese, I want to give to my brothers and sisters of the Diocese special commissions in order to help us live deeply the virtues of faith, hope, and love in the midst of our Church and for service to our brothers and sisters of today.

Elderly Brothers and Sisters,

During this jubilee year I give you the following liturgical text to help you discover even more this marvel that is the Church:

"Church of always, listening to the world, do you hear the forces of history as they are boiling? The earth is wracked with a dull violence, it is famished for unity, and seeks deliverance.

Church of always, at the service of the world, root the virtue of faith at the foundation of our distress. Unbind this quivering hope, as it sets out along the path of anguish and promise.

Church of always, Gospel to the world, set free from fear the earth that gives birth. Baptise in the Spirit the sprouting of its seed, flow on as a river of peace, and carry our history."

Suffering brothers and sisters, I offer you the following:

"If hope has made you walk further than your fear, your eyes shall be raised and Then you will be able to carry on up to the sun of God.

If suffering has made you shed tears of blood, your eyes shall be washed. Then you will be able to pray with your crucified brother.

If sadness has made you doubt, on the evening of abandonment, you will know how to carry your cross. Then you will be able to die as did God-made-Man.

If your weakness makes you fall along the road, you will be able to stretch out your arms. Then you will be able to dance in the joy of forgiveness."

Brothers and sisters who work and labour every day, I offer you these words:

"Jesus Christ, the keystone rejected by the builders but unique in the eyes of the Father, we sing our joy at being in you living stones set into your dwelling: a mysterious communion that love enriches and binds.

From these lives that suffering has carved and chiselled, from these stones where hope has engraved its newness, you build the sanctuary where the Spirit of God resides, and the Church is the witness of salvation to our world."

Brothers and sisters who form the youth of our Church, I offer to you these lines written by our young people:

If you receive the gift of God, you become a covenant sign;  
If you share the love of God, you become His presence in the world.

The beloved Son leads you to your Father, the Spirit of Jesus comes into your heart,  
the Spirit of Jesus transforms your life. Be grafted to the Tree of Life,  
come and share the joy of believers, come and work side of the Church."

To you my baptised brothers and sisters I offer these lines that tell us what we are through baptism

"A people that celebrates the new Easter, a people that passes from death to life, a people that God has acquired for Himself, Church of the Lord.

A people rooted in faith and love, people who place their hope in Christ, a people united by the Spirit, Church of the Lord.

And you, my brothers and sisters members of institutes of consecrated life, of societies of apostolic life, and of secular institutes, receive this Word as a mark of the work you have carried out in our midst:

"Happy the person who goes with joy under the yoke of Jesus. Happy the one who commits himself or herself to the wishes of God. Happy the one who gives the Spirit through the voice of Jesus. Paths open in that person's heart, and this person will be seated on the throne of the Son. In God's paradise, this person will receive the clothes of joy."

And you, my brother priests, you who are my primary collaborators, in all fraternity and solidarity I repeat to you the words of Peter:

"Tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it - not for sordid gain but eagerly."

*+ François Thibodeau*

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

« From A Bishop's Journal » (042) (11 November 1994)