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## **HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DIOCESE!**



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Just a few hours before the beginning of activities marking the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Diocese of Edmundston, I once again invite you to celebrate in your parishes on December 8 the feast of our patroness, the Immaculate Conception, and to come numerous to the celebration that will take place at the Cathedral on Sunday, December 11, at 4:00 PM. There are so many reasons for giving thanks. Fifty years, that's a pretty good chunk of our history. It is truly a 'jubilee' in the true sense of the word: it is really a holy year that we are inaugurating. Throughout the coming year we shall recall our history, a sacred history, a history of the people of God in the diocese of Edmundston. This history is composed of great moments, periods of association and of renewal. We live in a world that is very different from that of 1944-1945, but if together we try to uncover the trace of those who created our history and who witnessed to hope... our own sense of hope would be revitalised. How this would help us pick up the present and future challenges! Let us wish one another a Happy Birthday, and let us thank the Lord for the marvels which his Spirit has never ceased to accomplish among us since 1944.

### **HAPPY BIRTHDAY, CJEM!**

CJEM radio station and the Diocese of Edmundston were both established in December, 1944. On behalf of the Diocese of Edmundston I thank the managerial staff of CJEM for all they have accomplished in our midst: I congratulate them for their constant availability and for their deep commitment to positive, family and spiritual values which help in building up a most interesting milieu. As bishop of Edmundston, I wish CJEM a most prosperous future. As St. John the Evangelist has it, we would need quite a few pages to write about everything that this agency has accomplished among us! Even today, and in close collaboration with other media in our region, CJEM is the keen observer and reporter of what is being lived in our community. CJEM is one of the important elements not only for the broadcasting of suitable information, but also for genuine communion among the members of the community we form. To the rhythm of days and seasons, in simplicity and modesty, CJEM is a powerful agent of peace, truth, and life.

### **A WONDERFUL PROJECT: THE DIOCESE IN YOUR HOME!**

Throughout our jubilee year, a televised Mass will come to you each Sunday on the community television channel (Edmundston, Restigouche, Grand Falls), from one of the 33 parishes of our diocese. On December 3, Mass presided by Father Rino Albert and animated by a group of young people of Edmundston was taped at Notre-Dame-du-Sacré-Coeur Church. On December 11, the Mass inaugurating the opening of our holy year will be televised from the Cathedral. On December 18, Mass will be televised from Assumption Church in Grand Falls. as you can see, it is a modest project, but it will allow us to recognise on the television screen the Christian communities of our Diocese, from Perth-Andover to Connors, and from St-Leonard to St-Jean-Baptiste, whether they be francophone, anglophone, or Maliseet. It is a vibrant project: it is up to us to experience it on a weekly basis.

### **OUR DIOCESAN SHRINE NEEDS RESTORING**

The current condition of our diocesan shrine requires as much courage, boldness, and solidarity as was required of its generous builders back in the 1920s. It behooves us to take up the present challenges and continue to guarantee a bright future to all those who will go on pilgrimage there and pray to St. Ann. Following

the example of our predecessors who made great sacrifices during a trying financial period, in order to build the church, we are invited to do our bit to preserve and restore this precious heritage.

After having consulted with the Diocesan Council of Economic Affairs, I gladly authorise a diocesan drive to be made by mail in December, 1994, a drive initiated by the parishioners of Ste-Anne parish through their Finance Committee and its Parish Pastoral Council, and encouraged by their devoted pastor, Father Gaétan Côté.

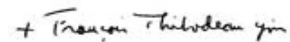
Despite the difficult times of economic recession, I hope that all in the Diocese will contribute to this outstanding diocesan ministry according to their means.

May St. Ann intercede for us with Jesus and Mary, at Christmas, that you may be graced with abundant blessings. In this holy shrine, people from our diocese and elsewhere, through the intercession of St. Anne, will continue to proclaim to the generations of the next millennium, and to bless the Lord by saying, "*His love is from age to age.*"

#### **THE 1994 ROMAN SYNOD**

Throughout October we were kept abreast of the happenings at the World Synod of Bishops in Rome, on the consecrated life. We had been preparing and praying for this for several months beforehand. It is truly a privilege for us to have the opportunity to welcome in our midst one of the participants in this Church event. And I am pleased to invite you to join the religious of the Diocese at the Hôtel-Dieu of St-Basile on Saturday, December 10, from 9:30 AM to 12:00 noon to hear Sister Gilberte Baril, O.P., a Dominican Missionary Sister from Beauport, Québec, who will talk to us about her experiences in Rome as a member of the Canadian delegation to the Synod. Sister Gilberte was one of the 'adjuutores' [resource persons] invited by the Holy Father; her noteworthy intervention dealt with "The Femininity of the People of God and the Consecrated Life of Women." During this our jubilee year, it is important to recognise the extraordinary contribution of the religious men and women, in the founding of our Diocese, in its life and vitality. Even now, though in smaller numbers, the 158 religious men and women from 12 religious congregations, societies of apostolic life, and secular institutes whom we are pleased to have among us, remind us of the fundamental dimensions of our baptismal life: an earnest daily prayer life, apostolic work among the most needy, with the sick, the youth and children, the handicapped, and among priests and future priests, in the fields of education and pastoral training of competent ministers of the Gospel. They remind us daily that we have the mission of deepening our knowledge of the Gospel which was handed down to us as an inheritance, which we must share and acclaim with our brothers and sisters.

Have a good Holy Year!



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

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