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## SUMMER ACTIVITIES FOR THE 50<sup>TH</sup>



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In the planning stage since last December 8, the activities of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our diocese continue to arouse great interest. A first deanery celebration will take place at St-Basile on March 19; I want to thank all those who are preparing this celebration with great care and enthusiasm. We are already to prepare the diocesan activities to be held in Edmundston from August 2 to 6, during the 18th annual *Foire Brayonne*. All members of the diocese are cordially invited to these activities of the 50<sup>th</sup>.

### GATHERING OF PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS BROTHERS AND SISTERS

On August 3, first Thursday of the month, a day of prayer will be held as usual on first Thursdays, but this time the place will be the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, and the time will be from 8:00 A.M. to 12:00 noon, to be followed by a beautiful organ concert from noon until 1:00 P.M. Guided tours of the cathedral will also be available. At 3:00 P.M. will take place the eucharistic gathering of bishops, priests, and religious brothers and sisters who were born or worked in our diocese. I count on the population to extend this fraternal invitation to those interested. Twenty-four religious communities have worked in our midst, but I do not know as yet how many congregations are privileged to have persons from our diocese, in their midst; I count on you to come up with an exact figure! As an example, the parish of St-François would have 8 priests, 1 brother, and 42 religious born in that parish, who joined twelve congregations... At St-Basile there would be 21 priests, 3 brothers and 51 sisters born there, who joined 14 different congregations.

On Friday, August 4, music and choral entertainment will be offered in the proximity of Notre-Dame-du-Sacré-Coeur Church. Artists will join in celebrating the Edmundston Church by entertaining us with songs of all kinds.

On Saturday, August 5, there will be a gathering in Notre-Dame-des-Sept-Douleurs Church of all persons married in 1944-1945: we shall give thanks together for the fifty years of married life of these jubilarians. Please send your list of names to the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Secretariat at the Diocesan Centre. It is thanks to such couples that our diocesan Church has grown from year to year.

Sunday, August 6, at 9:30 A.M., celebration of the Lord's Day will take place at the city centre, and the celebration will be televised by Radio-Canada the following Sunday [August 13]. The opening procession will form at 9:00 A.M. with the priests, bishops, and all those who were confirmed in 1944-1945. Here too we count on you to advise those interested and to forward their names to the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Secretariat. The afternoon will be taken up with the traditional parade of floats, among which will be the Diocese's own 'mascot,' the jubilee vessel, the *MaRéVie*.

These times of simple and popular rejoicing can truly help us better understand that the Edmundston Diocese Church is composed of all believers who witness on a daily basis to their faith, hope, and charity. The Edmundston Diocese Church is full of life and solidarity!

A few souvenir novelty-items are already available, with others to come: cassettes of our theme song 'Église bien-aimée' and five other melodies, lapel button with the diocesan coat of arms, the souvenir album of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, T-shirts, pennants and flags with the diocesan colours.

Let us celebrate together fifty years of history often woven with courage and hope.

Let us celebrate the life moments we are now living in happiness.

Let us celebrate together the forthcoming years: they are a promise of life, for us.

### **THE EDMUNDSTON SEMINARY**

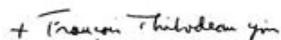
Even if I have not written about it recently, be assured that this project is still very much alive and continues its progression. What we are looking at is not first and foremost buildings or other big structures. It is composed first and foremost of persons, of young people who desire the priesthood, and of a formation team to help these young men in their vocation discernment and spiritual mentoring.

The vocation programme *Called by Name* was launched in the diocese in February. Pastors, lay persons, and religious are taking a part in this challenging activity. Names of young persons are discretely collected; a few of them meet with the vocation ministry team for sharing, although sometimes it might be the team or one of its members that will take the initiative.

The formation team of the Edmundston Diocese will be able to welcome young people who have a vocation project and who would like to talk about it in all confidence with another adult. Besides finding in the formation team prayer and fellowship projects, it will be possible to plan to eventually integrate oneself to the milieu and complete some of the academic requirements, in such a way that the formal theological training outside of Edmundston would be of short duration. Thanks to the collaboration of the St-Louis-Maillet University Centre, a fair amount of training could be available in our own milieu. I plan on announcing in June the names of those forming the Seminary team.

### **PASTORAL AND FINANCIAL SITUATION**

I have received a few letters regarding the provisional recommendations of the Review Committee looking into the pastoral and financial situation of the Edmundston Diocese. They indicate the interest shown by many people in our diocese. We must pursue our study of possible pastoral readjustments: pastoral team, formation of pastoral agents, possible inter-community services, eventual future of the Diocesan Centre, etc. I am pleased to say that the Diocesan Centre is not for sale at this time. Far from it! We are trying to make it a paying proposition as quickly as possible. If we didn't have one, we would want one! It is true that the Review Committee recommends the sale of the Centre if we cannot make it pay its way. Someone said to me: "If every person in the diocese gave one dollar toward the Centre, we would save it..." You see: We probably don't have to look for costly or big solutions... perhaps with a 'loonie' or a 'double' things could go much better. WE must continue to look at solutions together. The history of our young diocese shows us that our forebears had to take up immense challenges: the construction of most of our churches, the construction of St-Louis University, etc. I am certain of this: We can pursue together those projects we hold dear. I thank you for your prayers and your solidarity.



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