
TRINITARIAN PRAISE



Throughout the time of the priests' retreat which took place from May 8 to 12 and which had as theme *His Love Is from Age to Age*, we had the unique opportunity to contemplate further through the works of creation the love of God the Father, through the work of redemption and evangelisation the love of God the Son, and through the Church and its sacraments the love of God the Holy Spirit. Besides, the new flag of our diocesan Church evokes this love.

I consider it a great grace to have lived this annual retreat with the priests and seminarians. I found them truly edifying in their spirit of recollection, their faithful attendance in the different retreat activities, their prayer, and their silence: complete silence for 88 hours! There was much solidarity between us, which helped us experience to the utmost this most important spiritual endeavour. I also want to express my gratitude to all those who prayed for us and with us. From morning to night, in the presence of the exposed Blessed Sacrament, hundreds of persons visited the bishop's chapel: a magnificent gesture of mutual support and of invaluable encouragement. I also thank all others who prayed at home, in their parish, or their community. Come to mind especially the residents of the Hôtel-Dieu Infirmary in St.-Basile. A ninety year old sister even came to spend over an hour in the chapel.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE GRADUATES!

These days, several young persons are taking a big step in their years of schooling. Sunday, May 14 marked the Commencement Exercises of the St-Louis-Maillet University Centre graduates. Soon it will be the time of Community College and High School graduations. On these occasions I would like to give them a friend's words of advice: Respect, defend, love and serve life, all human life. It is only along this path that you will find justice, development, true freedom, peace, and happiness. This is the passionate appeal made by Pope John Paul in his *Gospel of Life*, and which I also make.

PASTORAL AND FINANCIAL SITUATION

Thanks to God and the professional care he received at the Edmundston Regional Hospital, Mr. Carmel Caouette, president of the Study Committee on the Pastoral and Financial Situation of the Diocese, has been able to resume his activities. The Committee met on Monday, May 15, to evaluate the temporary recommendations that had been submitted to the priests, pastoral agents, and members of the PPCs who met at the Diocesan Centre in February. The recommendations were taken seriously and comments received were very positive. There is a feeling that we are encouraged to take up together the new challenges: parish pastoral councils, economic affairs committees, continuation of the School of Faith, inauguration of a Pastoral Formation service, opening of the diocesan seminary, and immediate implementation of financial measures (moratorium, authorization, zero deficit). Before the end of their mandate in November of this year, members of the committee want to further study the means to be taken for maintaining the Diocesan Centre: scheduling of new groups and organisations, highlighting the annual Christ the King Special Collection, or revising the diocesan per capita tax rate. All suggestions and recommendations are welcome.

NEW PASTORAL LETTER

On the occasion of Pentecost Sunday 1995 I shall be publishing a new pastoral letter on the importance of having parish communities that are really concerned with the future of all its members, "devoted to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of the bread and the prayers" [Acts 2:42]. It shall be like a review of all the documents for reflection which were taken up during the course of the year, and a guidepost for acting during forthcoming pastoral years, regarding the catechetical and sacramental formation of our children, regarding marriage preparation and family support, regarding biblical renewal and pastoral formation, etc. Last year, at the same Pentecost time I published a letter on human dignity and the holiness of God. On the eve of the 50th Anniversary festivities, I had given you the product of my reflection on our beloved Edmundston Church. I wrote twice to the priests to stress the importance of their prayer life and ministry, and to express my deepest gratitude to them.

CATECHETICS IN SCHOOL [FRENCH SECTOR]: AN ILLUMINATING SURVEY

According to a survey among the primary and secondary school teachers in [the French sector of] our diocese, more than 96 % of our children had catechetics at the elementary level (4521 on 4679), and over 93 % at the secondary level (1587 on 1648). The time allotted to the teaching of catechetics in primary grades varies from 30 to 135 minutes per week, while for secondary grades the average per school is 59 minutes. More than 75 % of elementary school teachers surveyed (210 on 258) and 79 % of secondary school teachers (57 on 72) believe that catechetics should continue being taught in the schools because of its great spiritual value and for a complete education of the children. In this survey the teachers also talk of their own training in catechetics as well as about the problems met and pointers for the future. The recent visit of Mrs. Christiane Gagnon was most positive in making the contents and visual presentation of our religious texts better known to the teachers. In the name of the Edmundston Church I thank and congratulate the catechists and the parents for the marvellous work they are accomplishing with our children and youth.

A SPECIAL WELCOME TO THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY FESTIVITIES

According to information received, there would have been 3442 baptisms, 13339 confirmations, and 794 weddings in 1944-1945. I want to note that on Thursday, August 3, there will be a eucharistic celebration at 3:00 P.M. at the Cathedral for all the priests and religious who were born or who worked in the diocese of Edmundston. On Saturday, August 5 at 2:00 P.M. at Notre-Dame-des-Sept-Douleurs Church, we shall be celebrating all those who were married in 1944-1945. Those baptised or confirmed in 1944-1945 are especially invited to the Mass that is to be celebrated on Sunday, August 6, at 9:00 A.M. in downtown Edmundston. Please spread the message to those targeted. Have a beautiful 50th!

FUTURE PASTORAL AGENTS

Do not forget the information day of May 27, 1995, from, 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., at the Diocesan Centre, on the formation programme for future pastoral agents. Thanks to the beautiful work of Sister Géraldine Brotherton, F.M.A., a new project is taking shape in the diocese, the establishment of the Pastoral Formation Service.

+ François Thibodeau ym

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

« From A Bishop's Journal » (069) (24 May 1995)