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## KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

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There were more than 600 of them attending the Knights of Columbus State Convention that took place in Edmundston on May 20 to 22. Bishop Gérard Dionne, the State Chaplain, was with them throughout, and he addressed them on a number of occasions, especially at the Sunday Mass celebration. I was pleased to welcome the group at the cathedral on Saturday evening, when I told them that "Thirty years ago this year, at the time I was just ordained, I had the honour of being received Knight of Columbus. I have found in our brother knights a boundless sense of availability, a desire to serve the Church, constant regard for the Church's needs, especially regarding priestly vocations, and generous support of pastoral projects. I hope with all my heart that you continue in this happy tradition. Our young diocese is but fifty years old, but already in 1944 - at which time the actual State Chaplain was only a seminarian! - Mgr. W.J. Conway Council N°. 1932 had been in existence for 25 years.

"The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have said to you' (Jn. 14:26). May this verse from the Gospel for the Fifth Sunday after Easter incite you, Brother Knights, to remember everything that the Risen Jesus accomplished during his mission on earth, which he desires to continue today with each one of you who have become his members through Baptism and who desire to collaborate with him in building up the Kingdom of God. You who were confirmed with the gift of the Holy Spirit, remember always the precious and marvellous gifts you have received. It isn't a spirit of fear, but one of strength and fearlessness. May this State Congress really help you experience the faith, hope, and love of our beloved Church. May you proclaim with Mary, the Immaculate Conception: *'His love is from age to age.'*"

### FIRST RECONCILIATION, FIRST COMMUNION

I was really touched by the evaluation which some parents and catechists made regarding the celebration of the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Communion. For the most part, this period of preparation was quality time spent between parents and children. Parents did not skimp on time taken to participate in these preparations, and found much pleasure in it; they even learned much, from all these meetings. There was a good participation on the part of parents, an excellent programme, interesting and nicely illustrated manuals, timely information, good parish committees... these are a few things I picked up from the evaluations. The celebration of these two sacraments is a spiritual experience of God revealed in Jesus Christ. The two texts used were very appreciated: this is a great example of what can be carried out where there is collaboration between the parish and the school: A community concerned with the little ones invests a lot for the life of the Church. To learn at an early age about forgiveness and friendship in Jesus is an important step taken along the road to holiness, and this, from an early age.

### VAROOM! VAROOM!

On Saturday, May 27, the Moto Tourism Association asked me to bless their motorcycles. I gladly responded to their invitation, since "There is nothing truly human which does not have a place in the heart of Christ's disciples." And the *Book of Blessings* says, "Vehicles help us to move about our world more easily, and may give us the opportunity to see more of God's wonders and to meet other people... Sound recreation, which helps us to be refreshed and renewed, may be physical, mental, cultural, or social." [p. 148, 168] May this

blessing go especially with the young who will be using these motorcycles during the course of the year: May the Lord guide their journey so that they may go in peace and solidarity; may they discover the beauty of creation and the joy of living, and may they eventually reach eternal life.

### **To BE WITH OUR YOUTH**

I have a number of opportunities to experience important moments with our youth: the Eastern Canadian Sports and rhythmic Gymnastics Championships, the meeting with the Young Entrepreneurs of Madawaska who are chock full of energy and creativity, and the meeting with our youth at the Polyvalente of the Cité des Jeunes: It is good to see and experience their energy, persistence, and perseverance. There is a lot of life, out there! I am reminded of the Scouts who are organising their June 17 Rally; I am reminded also of the great meeting that is to take place August 12 and 13, where 3,000 youth are expected!... This is good news: our youth are interested in the diocese's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and they will express this in their own way during the summer. Fantastic! Last summer a whole youth network was established throughout the diocese; they are true to their word, and it will benefit both them and the Church as a whole.

### **FAITH AND LIGHT**

On May 19 to 21 more than fifty members of the Faith and Light Movement gathered together at the Base de Plein Air in Pohénégamook [Québec]. Their theme was "Let's Fellowship in Joy and Friendship," and they came from throughout the eastern Canada region: Gaspé and the Beauce (of course! [Bishop Thibodeau's home region]... and from Edmundston, to celebrate the twenty years of Faith and Light [a Jean Vanier movement] in Canada. Long life to this indispensable movement so totally devoted to the mentally handicapped. Congratulations to all the parents and volunteers who are concerned about their physically handicapped brothers and sisters. Together they accomplish great things.

### **50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY SOUVENIRS**

The Central Committee deserves high praise for the quality products offered to the population. If you haven't already done so, hurry! Get one or the other article marking our fiftieth anniversary, from the Diocesan Centre or at your rectory: music cassette [French] with the theme song and other religious songs, souvenir album, sweat shirts and T-shirts, flags of the diocese, lapel pins, etc. Don't wait till summer, you could miss some items. I think that we can all be proud of these objects. Don't hesitate to display the diocesan flag.

Have a good week.

*+ François Thibodeau ym*

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

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