
"A VIOLENT WIND FILLED THE HOUSE OF THE APOSTLES!"



On the occasion of the great feast of Pentecost and for a second consecutive year I am publishing a pastoral letter to stress the importance of parish communities concerned with each of its members, by first recalling the historic moment of the Christian Pentecost: "A violent wind filled the house of the apostles; they began to proclaim the marvels of God in other languages. Nations, understand and proclaim: Blessed are you, Creator Spirit who renews the universe."

The Letter more or less takes up the questions which those in charge of the pastoral ministry have had to discuss, these last few months. I am therefore summarising and publishing the recommendations made regarding community prayer and keeping the Day of the Lord, as well as regarding the formation of parish pastoral councils and economic affairs committees, sacramental preparation, and the urgency of raising up workers for the Gospel. This Pastoral Letter would be like an image of these last few months' pastoral life. I thank all those who participated in all these consultations: may the present recommendations be a sign of the consensus reached and point out the direction our beloved Church has to take. May these lines motivate you to reflect to tirelessly work at building together in the Holy Spirit parish communities that are more and more devoted to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."

REVALUING THE SUNDAY GATHERING

The Edmundston Diocesan Synod (1987-1990) strongly urged that "the Day of the lord be revalued, that Sunday celebrations not be held before 6:00 P.M. Saturday evening, that the number of celebrations be decreased, and that quality of celebrations take precedence over quantity." I endorse these four recommendations and ask that inasmuch as it is possible they be implemented by September 1, 1995: revaluing Sunday, revaluing the Sunday gathering, number and quality of celebrations.

A COMMUNITY CONCERNED ABOUT THE CATECHETICAL AND SACRAMENTAL FORMATION OF ITS CHILDREN

So as not to be taken unaware by eventual changes to our [francophone] education system, it is imperative that in each parish committees or small teams be constituted to respond to the different spiritual and sacramental needs of our children.

A COMMUNITY CONCERNED WITH PROMOTING HAPPY HOMES

Marriage preparation has always been considered as a most important step in the life of our families. Each marriage must be carefully prepared. Such a commitment can be neither improvised nor rushed. It is necessary that there be adequate preparation, before accepting a mission as important as that given to a Christian couple. For this reason engaged couples will be invited to meet a first time with the person looking after marriage preparation in their parish, one year before the eventual date of their marriage. I call on young and not-so-young couples to constantly grow in their love life, and I invite them to help one another along this path.

PARISH COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES

Church renewal bids us to construct and to be persistent in living "communion, collegiality, and co-responsibility:" a parish pastoral council is necessary for the life and future of a parish. Moreover, a finance committee working with the pastor who bears the first responsibility for the parish, must be set up in each parish by January 1, 1996. It is necessary that the pastor be more and more liberated from administrative constraints so as to devote himself more fully to prayer, and the education in the faith and the spiritual and pastoral renewal of his parishioners, and especially of the different parish committees.

A COMMUNITY CONCERNED WITH DISCERNING AND ENCOURAGING

THOSE WHOM THE LORD CALLS TO SERVICE IN THE CHURCH

The *Called by Name* vocation programme was launched in our diocese, a number of weeks ago. The programme is an invitation to the parish community as a whole to implicate itself in the discerning of those called by the lord to a particular service in the Church, whether it be as religious brothers or sisters, missionaries, deacons or priests, as well as pastoral agents.

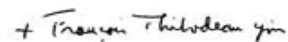
A PARISH-SEMINARY

The inauguration of our diocesan seminary on August 2 is a major sign of hope for our Church. The Edmundston Diocesan Seminary will be a vocation centre where young and not-so-young men who wish to become priests in order to respond to the needs of the people of God, will be enabled to undergo the necessary stages leading to priestly ordination: deepening of one's life as a baptised and confirmed Christian, gradual knowledge of the Edmundston Diocese Church, formation in personal and community prayer, commitment to one's brothers and sisters, especially the most needy, university studies leading to a baccalaureate. The Christian community of Notre-Dame-du-Sacré-Coeur Parish has been entrusted with the mission of praying for vocations and of taking whatever initiatives are needed to accompany and support those whom the Lord is calling to the priesthood.

A COMMUNITY TURNED TOWARD THE YEAR 2000

The year which will have reminded us of the fifty years of our diocese will lead us closer to the second millennium. Following consultations carried out these last months, I am pleased to announce that five Eucharistic Congresses will be held on the occasion of the Feast of Corpus Christi, one in each of the five deaneries of the diocese: Restigouche (June 9, 1996), Grand Falls (June 1, 1997), Southern Victoria (June 14, 1998), Upper Madawaska (June 6, 1999) and Edmundston in June of the year 2000. This will be a special time for a new evangelization and a quality sacramental celebration. Each Congress will be preceded with the bishop's pastoral visit to the host deanery, where he will visit each parish, and the Chrism Mass will be celebrated in a parish of said deanery.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, each community is therefore called upon to recapture its original sense of daring and adventure, to be filled with evangelical creativity, to struggle, to be watchful, and to work for the coming of the Kingdom of God.



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