
THE CELEBRATING CONTINUES!



With festivities in the Grand Falls Deanery June 11 and the Southern Victoria Deanery June 25, we continue to give thanks to God for everything beautiful experienced in our diocese, these last fifty years; and each deanery celebration unveils to us the particular aspects of our respective milieus. In Grand Falls, we thanked the Blessed Trinity for revealing itself in its great mystery of love and discovering the presence of God and finding signs of this presence in our lives is a priceless gift. Discovering the marvellous power of the Spirit in our world is an extraordinary benefaction from our God. How beautiful are His works! He is truly there in the midst of our lives!

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF LABRADOR-SHEFFERVILLE

Our diocese is very young: it was founded December 16, 1944. Since then, 18 other dioceses were erected throughout Canada: Baie-Comeau, La Pocatière, Yarmouth, and several others in northern Canada. June 3 and 4 I joined Bishop Gérard Dionne in Labrador City to celebrate the 50th anniversary of that diocese. We wanted to show our solidarity with Bishop Henri Goudreault, O.M.I., who is also a member of the Assembly of Atlantic Bishops: you'll have the opportunity to meet him, shortly. A jubilee celebration is a special occasion for showing episcopal solidarity; as a matter of fact, some twenty bishops have indicated to me that they plan on coming to Edmundston on August 6, for our 50th anniversary celebration... Besides the Apostolic Nuncio, we were 14 bishops at the Labrador City festivities. Saturday afternoon Mr. Jean-Marc Richard was ordained permanent deacon; the gala supper took place Saturday evening, during which Bishop Goudreault proceeded to the distribution of Diocesan Merit. Sunday morning there was a solemn Mass of Thanksgiving in English, French, and Inuit, followed by a brunch and a visit of the artistic exhibits.

The Labrador City-Schefferville Diocese is incredibly vast: 956,500 square kilometres; it covers all of New Québec (Nunavik). Labrador is part of the Lower North Shore of the St. Lawrence. Its total population is 44,455, of which 68 % is anglophone, 4 % francophone, and 28 % Inuit and Innu. There are 12,900 Catholics (29 % of the population). Jesuits, priests of the Diocese of Québec, Oblate Fathers, priests of the diocese of Harbour, and Eudist Fathers have all been missionaries there, at one time or another. One of my confrères, Father Louis Garnier, wrote about this remarkable epic that went from 1903 to 1945 in his book *Du cométique à l'avion*.

PERMANENT DIACONATE

Allow me to come back to the topic of the permanent diaconate. Jean-Marc Richard is a native of the Caraquet region, and had been working as a missionary in Northern Canada since a few years. He is married to Diane, daughter of Raymond and Jeanne d'Arc Boissard of Notre-Dame-du-Sacré-Coeur in Edmundston. My congratulations and best wishes to Jean-Marc and his wife. In the days of the Apostles the diaconate was held in high esteem in the Church: the Acts of the Apostles tell us the story of its institution. Nevertheless, in the course of time the permanent diaconate just about disappeared from the Latin Church. However, in October 1964, at the Third session of the Second Vatican Council, the bishops of the Church approved the principle of a renewal of the diaconate. "At a lower level of the hierarchy are to be found deacons, who receive the imposition of hands 'not unto the priesthood, but unto the ministry.' For, strengthened by sacramental grace they are dedicated to the People of God, in conjunction with the bishop and his body of priests, in the

service of the liturgy, of the Gospel and of works of charity" (*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, N^o 29*). In Edmundston, there are two proposals [of the Diocesan Synod, 1990] C one from the English sector that the permanent diaconate be restored, and one from the French sector that it not presently be restored.

FATHER'S DAY

It is my hope that June 18 be a beautiful occasion to recognise all fathers. May God our Father grace them with His abundant blessings. As for me, they can count on my special prayers. It isn't an easy task today, to be a father. Theirs is a great and demanding mission both in attitudes to have and in everyday behaviour.

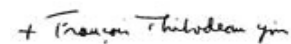
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, BISHOP DIONNE!

Bishop Gérard Dionne will be 76 years old on Monday, June 19. I wish him a Happy Birthday filled with health and peace. Some day he will have to tell me what retirement implies! Since January, 1994, I have discretely... observed him: he hasn't stopped working. He has given several retreats to both priests and lay people. The week of June 5 he conducted a retreat in English for the priests of the diocese of St. John's, Newfoundland; in May he was preaching in Gravelbourg [Sask.]. He also does a lot of ministry in parishes. He has also found time to write a first volume of memoirs on his childhood: both of which - volume and childhood - I find fascinating. Keep on edifying us, Bishop Dionne: you are showing us how life is one of the Lord's precious gifts.

1995 EUDIST GET-TOGETHER

In the past few weeks there was a lot of talk on what happened in Normandy in 1945, at the end of the war. For the Eudist Fathers and Brothers, Normandy has a special meaning: it is there that on March 25, 1643 a French priest, St. John Eudes (1601-1680), founded the community. On the occasion of the forthcoming Eudist Get-Together to be held in Edmundston June 26, 27, and 28, I want to officially thank the Eudists for all they have been and still are today in the Edmundston Diocese. I am proud of all they have accomplished in the field of education, for their presence among the needy, their help to the clergy, and their parish and diocesan ministry. At the Mass in honour of St. John Eudes which I shall be celebrating with them on Tuesday, June 27 (7:30 P.M.), I shall personally express the gratitude of the entire Edmundston Church to them.

Have a good week.



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

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