
INNER MOTIVATION



"The joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the men and women of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well. Nothing that is genuinely human fails to find an echo in their hearts." ¹ This statement of Vatican Council II urge me to address you regarding the forthcoming elections.

PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS

If May 8 of this year was a most important day in every locality because of municipal elections, September 11, 1995 seems to me a date of major importance for New Brunswick as a whole. Electoral campaign time is an important period for the population that is asked to consider the actual situation and to give itself the representatives judged to be the most capable of responding to the challenges of today. It is a period to really consider what young people, students, the unemployed, the workers, the elderly, those on social assistance, the sick, those in debt, those in prison or awaiting trial, the handicapped, etc., are going through. Since those we are to choose will have to take into account every citizen of their respective ridings, it is important that candidates give to the best of their knowledge specific and workable elements of their electoral platform.

I know that times are difficult for everyone, that many among us are still feeling the effects of the recession which brought about the closing of several sources of revenue for our country, and that from year to year the heritage that is ours is composed of both positive and negative, and that we must live with this.

DIVERSIFIED INTERESTS

While some are concerned with the province's highways condition, others are more concerned with the hospital or the school situation, while still others are distressed by social problems such as family violence, the high rate of suicides, the absence of job opportunities for those with extended schooling and training, and the financial situation of our young people. Others will stress the harmonious relationship to be promoted among everyone not only in New Brunswick but throughout Canada. Every citizen according to his or her own perspective is called upon to look at what it is that is going well in our society, and what could be improved. Each citizen is invited to consider these immediate personal interests, but within the broader context. This diversity of interests is understandable, but it does not always facilitate the choice of priorities. Faced with the complexity of such a situation, it is important to choose upright, just, fair, and honest individuals, leaders who can stand up to the challenge and who can also raise the legitimate enthusiasm and pride of all.

PRICELESS VALUE OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY

I urge the people of our diocese to pray for all the candidates, so that they have a clear vision of what must be accomplished, and the courage to carry it out in justice, truth, liberty, and love. I have often repeated that I firmly believe that politics must be one of the ways we daily live the challenge of justice, the challenge to live and to

respect the fundamental rights of each citizen, the challenge of charity and of its grandest requirements. The teaching of Vatican Council II can enlighten our undertaking: "Individual and collective activity, that monumental effort of man through the centuries to improve the circumstances of the world, presents no problem to believers: considered in itself, it corresponds to the plan of God. Man was created in God's image and was commanded to conquer the earth with all it contains and to rule the world in justice and holiness:[...] This holds good also for our daily work. When men and women provide for themselves and their families in such a way as to be of service to the community as well, they can rightly look upon their work as a prolongation of the work of the creator, a service to their fellow men, and their personal contribution to the fulfilment in history of the divine plan." ²

USEFUL MEETINGS

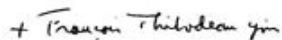
Twice I have had the honour of welcoming senators and both provincial and federal members of parliament at the Diocesan Centre. I wanted to meet them so as to tell them of my interest and appreciation for their daily mission, and in order to share with them regarding major topics like the situation of the poor in our region and respect for life and quality of life. I believe that these get-togethers have been most beneficial, and I wholeheartedly hope that this non-partisan relationship continue. I assure [these people] of my prayers and friendship.

May the present electoral campaign be an occasion for thinking about the whole community that we make up, especially about the weakest among us. May it continue in respect for others and in the free expression of one's ideas, as well as being an opportunity for finding new solutions to chronic social ills. Major challenges await our future representatives, and they must be able to count on our support in order to respond to them, especially in the areas of housing, education, culture, the family, development, communications, etc. Among our other tasks, we must learn about the electoral platforms of the different candidates, as well as about the candidates themselves.

HEARTFELT PRAYER

I make mine the following prayer: "I offer you, Lord, those members of the diocese who are summoned to choose those who are to represent them at the legislative assembly. Send down your Spirit upon them so that they may discern those whom you yourself are calling to serve your people. May your Spirit of Truth and Justice given them at Baptism and Confirmation incite them to work daily in your footsteps along the path of justice and holiness. Bless all those who accept to serve your people. Keep them from all harm. May their hearts be filled with compassion for all those suffering illness or poverty. Open their eyes and ears to the distress of the suffering; help these representatives come up with the best-suited solutions to our times. May they prepare with courage and determination a better road to the future."

Have a good electoral campaign!



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¹ *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, No. 1

² *Church in the Modern World*, No. 34