
NEW LEGISLATURE



I want to offer my best wishes to all who have been elected or re-elected MLAs; I pledge them daily prayer that they carry out their task on behalf of their own riding and the population as a whole with courage and generosity. They, too, through legislation and various initiatives, must make as tangible as possible to the entire population, the love of God Himself, this love which is from age to age. Throughout the history of the people of God, we can discern a deep sense of political commitment: those who lead the people must reveal through their behaviour and their legislation the goodness, justice, and mercy of the living God. May this new legislature be a fruitful one!

THE FIFTIETH CONTINUES!

September gives us the opportunity of again celebrating the Diocese's fiftieth anniversary. Radio-Canada, through its *Jour du Seigneur* television programme, broadcast on September 3 the August 6 festivities, and so we could once again appreciate the beauty of the songs, the fervour of the people, the significant presence of so many bishops and priests, and the enthusiastic participation of thousands. The demonstration marks a commitment to remember: to be light that all the baptised must be, peacemakers which all the confirmed must be, witnesses to God's covenant that all married couples must be, and good bread that we must all be to one another. It is also to be noted that the Youth Rally planning committee has been evaluating this historical event that will surely bear much fruit.

MARVELLOUS RESTIGOUCHE!

September 10 marked the Restigouche Deanery celebrations, and the population gathered together in the Kedgwick parish church which was filled with both young and old: the anniversary couples of our four parishes stood proudly in the midst of their families. From St-Jean-Baptiste, St-Martin, St-Quentin they came to the church of Notre-Dame-des-Prodiges, to give thanks for the fifty years of our diocesan Church.

There are many reasons for celebrating the fiftieth: these past fifty years, families have done so much through their hard work and generosity, perseverance and mutual help, to keep their churches going; the number of religious, priestly, and missionary vocations is relatively high. And families have done remarkably well in the education of their children. Nature is so beautiful and striking: just think of the Restigouche and its salmon! Think of its forests, God's gift to our people. On Sunday, September 17, the diocesan festivities will be held in the Upper Madawaska Deanery - and you are all invited!

STUDY COMMITTEE

Throughout the summer, the Committee on the Pastoral and Financial Situations of the Diocese, chaired by Mr. Carmel Caouette, has been hard at work. Meeting in August, members of the committee took cognisance of the research done by Fr. Lewis Long on the eventual cost of alternative formulas: If the bishop's residence and diocesan services were to be lodged elsewhere, what would be the cost? In the short term, it is clear that the cost

would exceed our actual budgets: finding space for fifteen offices for the diocesan services and building a modest bishop's residence would call for supplemental expenses. Hence, how do we draw the greatest profit from the actual Resource Centre? How can we promote activities that are compatible with the nature of the diocesan services and the bishop's residence? That is why the Study Committee, before tabling its final recommendations, has requested an extension to its mandate so as to allow a firm specialising in these questions to carefully study a number of alternatives to the actual situation of the Diocesan Centre. Additional studies will therefore be made in the next few weeks, notably among the different diocesan councils and services. Anyone wishing to have input into this process may contact the Study Committee.

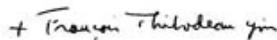
Recall that last February 1, the Study Committee brought to the priests, pastoral agents¹ and members of parish pastoral councils, important proposals in order to respond to the actual challenges of our pastoral life (formation of PPCs, continuation of the School of Faith, etc.), and to ensure a careful administration of our financial resources, namely a moratorium on all new construction and prior authorization for expenses exceeding \$15,000.00. The Committee will henceforth concentrate its energies on the Diocesan Centre's future.

POPE'S LETTER TO WOMEN

In an unprecedented gesture, the Holy Father wrote to the women of the whole world and tendered them his most cordial greetings on the occasion of the approaching Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held this time in Beijing; a letter full of gratitude for all that women have been throughout the ages and for what they are today. This thank-you to women is also a pressing call to everyone so that all - especially states and international institutions - do everything possible to give to women the full respect and dignity of their role. He writes: "I cannot help but show my admiration for women of goodwill who have consecrated themselves to the defense of the dignity of the feminine condition through conquering for them fundamental rights on the social, economic, and political levels, and who courageously undertook this initiative at a time when such a commitment on their part could be considered a transgression, the sign of a lack of femininity, a manifestation of exhibitionism, even a sin!" And the Pope adds: "I am convinced that the secret to rapidly walking on the road of full respect for feminine identity does not only pass through denunciation - however necessary this may be - discrimination, and injustice, but also and especially through a project for the effective and enlightened promotion of all aspects of feminine life, beginning with a renewed and universal awareness of the dignity of woman."

May this letter and meetings which have just taken place in China inspire us to remain vigilant regarding the actual situation of women in our respective milieus. Full of gratitude for everything that these women are, let us remain solicitous for their rights - especially the most fundamental - and for their fundamental equality with man. Let us especially recognise all that they have been and continue to be, in our beloved Church.

Have a good week!



+ François Thibodeau, C.J.M.
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¹ French Sector. Tr.