
"THE CHILD FIRST!"



November 20 will be National Children's Day, and it will surely be an occasion for showing appreciation to children, to enrich ourselves in our contacts with them, and to show them our affection and attachment. *"Children enrich our lives in a thousand ways. They see everything with new eyes and they contribute in remodelling the world that surrounds them. Adults who recognise this potential and who love children for all they can offer, whether within the family or elsewhere, encourage them to fully develop and actively share in the life of society:"* these are the hopes expressed by the promoters of this Children's Day. November 20 was chosen because it is the anniversary (1959) of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Children, and of the Convention (1989) regarding children's rights. This latter aims at guaranteeing the survival, protection, development and participation of all children. The Convention was ratified by Canada in 1991. I am glad that the Frontières School Board, District 3, chose *The Child First!* as its slogan, and that it has loudly proclaimed that the child is the only *raison d'être* of our school system, education being in harmony with the imagination and the creativeness of each child. Pastoral Jeunesse, the elementary school catechesis, and the Mission Office share the common concern for regard of every child in the diocese. I wish to the children of our diocese an memorable Day!

CHRIST THE KING COLLECTION

According to an honourable tradition, on the last Sunday of the liturgical year, which is also the feast of Christ the King, a special collection is taken up in parishes for the financial and pastoral needs of the diocese. The Diocesan Council for Economic Affairs has requested each pastor to promote this collection of November 25 and 26, and to send to the Diocesan Centre half the amount of all the sums gathered as these weekend masses. The Diocese has had three consecutive annual deficits of \$60,000. There are 60,000 persons in our diocese: together we can take up the challenge of a zero deficit if each one gives one more dollar to the Sunday collection. Presently, through what is called the diocesan per capita tax, all that is asked is \$2.25 per person, to receive various diocesan services. If anyone wishes to add a little more to one's usual donation, it will be greatly appreciated.

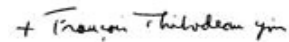
CONFIRMATION

On November 16 I shall begin Confirmation celebrations throughout the diocese. The celebration of Confirmation is an important event for the entire Christian community. It is the Gift of the Holy Spirit to His Church which continues today. Unless a particular deanery decides to make of the event a central celebration as was the case last June in the Southern Victoria Deanery, I shall visit each parish in the coming months, for the celebration of Confirmation. Youth who desire to receive the sacrament have but to write me a letter, care of their parish priest. Parents and teachers will surely help the 800-odd candidates to Confirmation take such an important step in welcoming the Spirit of the Lord. You are reminded that last June I wrote to all in the diocese to talk about this gift we receive from God: A mighty rushing wind arose on the house of the apostles, Pentecost day. In Confirmation, we welcome this same Holy Spirit along with His gifts and all His fruits.

MEMORABLE WORKSHOPS

During October, each of the five deaneries held workshops on parish pastoral councils, and it was a terrific undertaking marked by success on all fronts! The PPC (parish pastoral council) is charged with responding to the pastoral needs of everyone in the community and to coordinate the main community activities. And since it is a "pastoral" organisation, it must have the same attitudes, the same feelings which were those of him who is always the Good Shepherd in word and in deed. The PPC must look after the most neglected sheep, those who are most in need. We have often noted the difficult times that our young people, the elderly living alone, the marginalised and those on social assistance, go through. Members of PPCs have often been called upon to show concern for the unprovided for, and to try to understand how these people would like to be treated by their pastors. With their parish priest, PPCs have a concern for *everyone* who is part of the community, they see to it that the community become more and more diligent to the teaching of the apostles, faithful to fraternal communion, to the breaking of bread, and the prayers.

Have a good week!



+ François Thibodeau, C.J.M.
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