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## AS A GARDEN IS MADE

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*Words are inadequate to thank all those who made the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the diocese of Edmundston a reality. May the following excerpts from the closing homily express the gratitude of the Edmundston Diocese Church.*

### **MAGNIFICAT**

Our hearts overflow with gratitude today; our soul breaks out in joy. Throughout this Jubilee Year, we have as it touched the marvels which the Lord was pleased to execute among us. During the course of the year we witnessed the goodness of God in the Southern Victoria Deanery, and the Grand Falls, Restigouche, Upper Madawaska, and Edmundston Deaneries. Throughout the year we have worked at setting up a beautiful garden, abundant seeds were sown, bearing much good fruit and flowers for an exceptional diocesan garden. The Holy Spirit is truly at work. It is the wish of Jesus that we bear abundant fruit. A beautiful work is being accomplished in our beloved Church of the Edmundston Diocese: the Holy Spirit is at work in our midst: He gratifies us with His most marvellous gifts. By meditating on the Word of God like the Virgin Mary, let us gaze on this garden which only seeks to grow at the heart of our Church.

### **THE GARDEN OF SUFFERING**

Who will tell what has been accomplished, during these festive months: What prayers have been directed to heaven; countless brothers and sisters generously offered their sorrows and sufferings for the good of our Church. When we think apostolate, we generally think of activity, of pastoral project, but at the heart of the Church, we must also become aware of the irreplaceable seeds of suffering. Intimately united with Jesus, with his passion on the Cross, the sick partake in the salvation of humankind; they complete in their own bodies what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ. Brothers and sisters who are afflicted by illness, in the name of the Edmundston Diocese Church I thank you for the garden you keep on tending.

### **GARDEN OF YOUTH AND OF ELDERS**

Who will tell about what our youth and our elders devised and imagined, to celebrate the fifty years of our diocese? Throughout the year, youth in the Victoria and Restigouche Deaneries have kept in touch in order to get to know and appreciate one another better. Youth from Grand Falls, Edmundston, and Upper Madawaska joined together to experience an unforgettable twenty-four hour rally steeped in fellowship, learning, and celebration. Boy Scouts and Girl Guides set aside a full day, to experience the event together. Our celebrations gave our young people the desire to cultivate their garden. Together they sought to learn about the great mystery of the Church of yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

## IN THE DEANERIES

Major celebrations were held in all our parishes, to mark the event: prayers, masses, community meals! Each activity was most significant. In parishes the jubilee was marked by prayer and eucharistic celebrations. And in each deanery a special garden was cultivated, as it were. Beginning in March, the Edmundston Deanery revived the great devotion to St. Joseph; in June, the Grand Falls Deanery, grouping together its youth and elders, celebrated the feast of Corpus Christi. On June 23, the Southern Victoria Deanery celebrated the Holy Spirit Who gives life to the whole Church. The deanery also marked in a special way the faith of its pioneers: I shall never forget these moments of high emotion and of gratitude. In a blaze of autumn colour the Restigouche Deanery recognised the fidelity of its elders, while in Upper Madawaska an extraordinary pilgrimage opened wide the treasure of its religious heritage. And the summer activities made for a gathering of bishops, clergy, and religious who were born or worked in our diocese. The summer also witnessed the opening of our diocesan seminary, and highlighted the contribution of our married couples, and our baptised and confirmed members. Our hymn of gratitude could be heard throughout the land.

## HOMECOMING AND RECONCILIATION

Our festivities will have been a great opportunity for homecomings and celebrations; numerous conferences were held in the diocese: the North American Eudist Conference, the Atlantic Region Catechetical Conference, the New Brunswick Catholic Health Association Conference, the Charismatic Congress, etc. These were important moments in the life of our Diocese. Besides, in my pastoral letter on the Edmundston Diocese Church I voiced the hope that this jubilee year would be one of forgiveness and reconciliation. I dare believe that in the midst of our celebrating, this dimension was ever present as we received the forgiveness of God Himself, and as we welcomed a brother or sister we had not seen in a long time. Our Church is the Church of Jesus in which there is room for everybody.

## A GARDEN TO LOOK AFTER

Our festivities will shortly be a thing of the past, but you know that I would so like that the celebration continue year after year. Who could stop us? We have hardly seeded our garden, and we shall have to tend it very carefully. Jesus is the vine, and we are the branches. His gifts are innumerable; it is always the same Spirit Who gives the Church its greatest gifts. Let us allow ourselves to be touched by the Spirit, the Spirit of wisdom and discernment, the Spirit of counsel and strength, the Spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord. As on Pentecost itself, a strong wind rose in the midst of the Church. Let us continue to work carefully for our church community, for all our church communities: Let us have a daily concern for each of its members.

May these moments be for us today thanksgiving and petition; may Jesus be the head Gardener who renews his Spirit in us. Jesus came that we may have life to the full. He wants us to bear many fruits, fruit that will last. He makes his dwelling in us. At the dawn of the second half of our century, may our hearts ever recognise, praise and bless him. Let us walk together towards the year 2000, let us walk together towards a new encounter with faith, hope, and charity.

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