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## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR YOUNG PEOPLE!

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### TERRIFIC SOLIDARITY

This week I want to write a few lines to acknowledge in a special way the acts of solidarity performed by our young people at Christmas time, and especially on the great Friendship Chain they formed [in Edmundston], on December 8. This was but one example among many. Throughout December, young people contributed to bringing help to the needy both in our midst and around the world. Some of our young people even took some of their lunch money to share with needier youth. What they did to the needier they did to Jesus himself: of this I am sure. Congratulations for your sharing!

### MISSIONARY SOLIDARITY

Beginning the first weeks in September, about ten young people got together to form what is called *Jeunesse Missionnaire* [Mission Youth]. Spanish language instruction, an in-depth study of their Baptism commitment and meditation on the Word of God: all of these are aspects of the project they cherish together to live a once-in-a-lifetime experience with needy families in Mexico, in May of this year. Here, too, it is marvellous to see the welcome given these young people as they visit our parishes. Congratulations for this missionary commitment!

### YOUNG PEOPLE ON RADIO

I am glad to see that every so often the *Au rythme de l'Église* radio programme is hosted by young people. They deal with topics of interest to them, and they share on religious experiences of the day. They have already aroused the interest of the general population. The programme is very lively and promising. Congratulations for those signs of life!

### CONFIRMEES WHO EDIFY ME

Just like last year, I am amazed that young people should write asking me to be confirmed. I praise their parents, teachers and pastors who spare no effort to adequately prepare them for this great sacrament. Before next June, some 800 other young people will have received the sacrament.

### AMAZING LETTERS

As I did last year, I want to share with you a few of the letters I received from future confirmees. These letters are truly a profession of faith that rises from the hearts of our youth. See with your own heart what they have written:

*"In my heart I feel ready to receive Confirmation. What I shall be receiving is a new strength to help me in my weakness; it will also be a powerful light to guide my way. I am very eager to share my friendship with my friends."*

*"For a few weeks now I have been preparing for Confirmation with my family, my friends, and our catechists. We have prayed together and studied together, and I have learned that to be confirmed is to love and to believe in Jesus with all one's heart."*

*"To be confirmed means to prove once for all that I truly received the Holy Spirit at my baptism."*

*"I would like to follow the example of Jesus and be more willing to help, in the future."*

*"To be confirmed is a gift of Jesus who confirms the grace of my baptism."*

*"I want to allow the power of love that I received at baptism to grow through my confirmation. I know that I am committing myself to becoming a more responsible person and living as best I can in the manner of Jesus."*

*"Confirmation is to confirm that the Holy Spirit whom I received at baptism is always there to help me in my daily life."*

#### **A YOUNG PERSON'S PRAYER**

I end this week with this prayer by a soon-to-be-confirmed youth: *"Thank you for watching over me, for taking care of my health. Thank you for having given me parents, sisters, relatives, and all my friends. Thank you for the good food and for my clothes. Thank you for my schooling and my books. Thank you for the beautiful scenery and for my life. But thank you especially for welcoming me so warmly to be confirmed..."* Like you I am amazed by what these young 10- and 11-year-olds carry in their hearts: I do not believe that I could have written like that at the age of 11. The Holy Spirit is very much at work in our youth. Congratulations to the Spirit!

Have a good week.

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