
DAILY JOYS AND CHALLENGES



These next few days I shall be attending the Canadian Bishops' Annual Meeting; about a hundred of us will be meeting at Halifax from October 17 to 22, and the study theme is Seeking Christ Today. There are over thirty items on the agenda, so we shall be busy! Among other topics we shall be discussing the Synod of Bishops for the Americas, to be held at Rome at the end of 1997; other items are the preparations for the Great Jubilee of the year 2000, the condition of the poor in Canada, the future of the religious life, etc. Each of the twelve national or sector commissions will present its report and its priorities. The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops is actually comprised of 129 bishops, among whom are 71 diocesan bishops, 19 auxiliary and 39 retired bishops. we request your faithful prayer for these first pastors of the Canadian Church.

THANK YOU TO JOHN PAUL II

On October 16, 1978, Cardinal Karol Wojtyla was elected pope under the name of John Paul II, and he inaugurated his new pastoral ministry on the twenty-second of that month, by proclaiming « Open up! Open wide the doors to Christ! To his saving power! Open wide states' borders, the economic and political systems, the immense fields of culture, civilisation, development. Do not be afraid! Open up! » In my personal name and on behalf of the Edmundston Diocese Church, I want to express my deepest gratitude for all he has been for humankind as a whole, these last eighteen years. A man of God, he was been steadfast in apostolic work. On the occasion of his fiftieth anniversary of ordination, November 1, I wish him continued strength and health to carry on the work begun. « Lord, you made of St. Peter, chief of the apostles, the foundation stone of your Church: look with favour on Pope John Paul II whom you have chosen as his successor; may he be the unshakeable rock capable of confirming your people in the faith and of keeping it within the same communion. »

WELCOME TO OUR NEW COLLABORATORS

I was pleased to welcome Father Claude Côté, C.J.M., in August, to minister as pastor of Saint-François-d'Assise Parish in Clair, as well as Father Gaston Deschênes, a Marist, as chaplain of the Foyer St-Joseph in St-Basile and assistant chaplain at the Edmundston Regional Hospital. And these days I am receiving another gift with the coming of Father Yvon Samson, a Trinitarian priest who is to be the spiritual advisor of the Marie-Jeunesse group and who shall also be involved in the [French] school system as chaplain. I thank divine Providence for these new collaborators and I extend to them a brotherly welcome. The A.M. Sormany Regional High School is pleased to have Fr. Samson on staff. The Cité des Jeunes has more than two thousand students; the seminarian Gaëtan Bernier, Martin Laflamme of the Marie-Jeunesse group, and Fr. Samson will be working together to minister at this institution. Note also that at Rivière-Verte Father Alfred Ouellet has been appointed administrator of that parish, since Father Alfred Irving was unable to take on this pastoral task because of health reasons.

WELCOME AND MISSION

May World Mission Day on October 20 rekindle in us the love and solidarity we need for our brothers and sisters throughout the world. May National Family Week (October 20-26) be successful. I am certain that one who does not turn away from one's brother or sister but who extends a loving welcome will receive an exceptional reward in return. Such seeds of love bring forth a civilisation of love.

MAINTENANCE AND CONSTRUCTION

While workers have been repairing churches and rectories in Drummond, Grand Falls, Baker Lake and St-Léonard-Parent, the faithful of St-François-de-Madawaska Parish got together to put up a "parishioners' house" with no additional debt to the parish. I congratulate and wholeheartedly thank all those responsible for the work accomplished in building or maintaining our edifices. May they be used as appropriately as possible, either as a residence for the person in charge of the parish or as a place for dispensing religious education to adults, for parish meetings, or for the needs of families in the parish. And may the meetings to be held shortly between parish pastoral councils and economic affairs committees in each of the five deaneries be most beneficial to all.

GROUP OF ONE THOUSAND

Following meetings these last few weeks to find ways of financing the diocesan services and ensuring their continuation, I once again come to you with open hands, as we try to avert another budget deficit, this year. But first I want to thank, on behalf of our diocesan Church, all of you who were instrumental in establishing the Group of 1000 or who are members of it: thanks to you, we have so far¹ been able to collect \$43,049. It is essential that we pursue this new enterprise and that in the coming weeks we find another 600 persons to contribute \$100. I trust that we shall be able to pick up this challenge on a voluntary or personal basis.

OPEN DOORS

On November 24, feast of Christ the King, the special collection is for the Diocese of Edmundston. Here, too, I count on your generosity. You know more and more about our pastoral needs as well as the current pastoral projects; I trust that we shall be able to double what we have received so far, from this collection. To mark the 25th anniversary of our Diocesan Centre, there will be "open house" on that Sunday, from 2:00 to 4:00 PM, for all who would like to visit our diocesan services; service personnel will be on hand to welcome you. If these two committees, the Group of 1000 and the Special collection, do not succeed according to expectations, the Diocesan Committee for Economic Affairs will have to look into the feasibility of implementing one of the recommendations made, namely, an increase, come January, 1997, in the diocesan per capita tax paid by each parish. Please believe in my desire to always collaborate with you so that our diocesan Church be able to respond as adequately as possible to the most important pastoral needs at both the diocesan and parish levels. Have a good week!

+ François Thibodeau

+ François Thibodeau, C.J.M.

Bishop of Edmundston

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