
A SIGN OF HOPE FOR OUR WORLD (5)



In publishing these paragraphs from the Canadian Bishops' Pastoral Letter on the Eradication of Poverty, I urge you to recognise the poor in your milieu, and to carry on the liberating work of our God, the work of justice, and to walk along the path of solidarity. On this International Day of the Child, let us not only think of children: let us do something for them. One child in five lives in poverty, despite the commitment of our governments to eradicate poverty among them.

INTEGRATED SOCIAL PROGRAMMES

« Fairer and even preferential trade practices for the countries of the South, controls and taxes on international speculative interest, ecological tax reforms, curtailment of military spending, corporate codes of conduct and other restraints designed to increase dignified employment while fostering the circulation of more benefits in local communities, all are among laudable and possible goals. In an important study of eleven countries where governments made policy choices to reduce poverty (especially of children), it was discovered that none of the successful countries had relied exclusively on the trickle-down benefits of growth or market forces as such. In every case, investment in human development such as education and health became government priorities. »

SOLIDARITY WITH OUR FELLOW CANADIANS

« Canada also has something to learn from these experiences. In order to take steps toward the eradication of poverty in our country, particularly among women, aboriginal people, displaced persons and families, we join our voices to those of many Canadians calling for alternative policies aimed at implementing fair tax reforms and ending corporate tax loopholes, creating dignified jobs, lowering interest rates, and preventing the gutting of social programmes. There are many ways to fight family poverty and gender injustice: adopting new and fairer gender relations within the family, promoting increased sharing of home management activities, improving child support payments, instituting tax reform, and educating boys to the important responsibilities of fatherhood. We again join those people of good faith who call for a renewed commitment by governments and the population to place the fight against poverty and the redistributive policies at the top of national priorities. »

« Pursuing the work of God in order to bring hope to our world, inspiration is to be found among the efforts of several groups: the St. Vincent de Paul Society which this year celebrates its 150th anniversary in Canada; the anti-poverty activities of ecumenical coalitions such as PLURA; the indispensable work of community-based organisations and women's groups, the economic development strategies of local and regional groups, and the co-op movement in work, production, and services. We would like to stress, however, that the most effective anti-poverty remedy in Canada today is a good and steady job. In human as well as economic terms, Canadians can ill afford to allow the current damaging level of unemployment to become a permanent feature of their nation's economic reality. Here lies a massive and unavoidable challenge for policy makers in governments, the private and non-private sectors. »

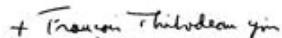
A GREATLY NEEDED COLLECTION

Following meetings held these last few weeks to find needed financing for the survival of our diocesan services, I once again come to you with cap in hand to test your generosity so as to avoid a budget deficit for the diocese. I first of all want to thank all those who set up the Group of 1000 and all those who have become members; thanks to them we have received \$51,950.00 so far. It is essential that we pursue the work started and that in the next few days we find other people to make a donation of \$100.00; I trust that we shall be up to the challenge, on a personal and voluntary basis. On Sunday, November 24, Feast of Christ the King, the special collection is for the needs of the Diocesan Church. Here, too, I count on your generosity. You know about the new pastoral needs we have, you also know about the pastoral projects already being implemented. I have faith that the amounts received in this special collection will double. If these two activities - The Group of 1000 and the Special Collection - do not produce the desired results, the Diocesan Council for Economic Affairs will have to consider the possibility of implementing the recommendation that the diocesan per capita tax be raised that much more, in January, 1997. At the present, the per capita tax is \$2.25 per person. Be assured of my desire to constantly collaborate with you so that our Diocesan Church may be in a position to respond as adequately as possible to the most urgent needs, whatever they be.

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DIOCESAN CENTRE

To mark the 25th Anniversary of the Diocesan Centre, you are invited to visit the diocesan services on December 1, from 2:00 to 4:30 PM. It was in the fall of 1971 that Bishop Fernand Lacroix acquired for the Diocese of Edmundston the Oblate Fathers Retreat House, and turned it into a Centre for the bishop's residence, the diocesan services, and the Renewal Centre. On January 1, 1972 it was "open house" at the new Centre; and to mark this occasion, I give you a special invitation. Here you will have to chance to meet some of our faithful collaborators.

Happy Children's Day!



+ François Thibodeau, C.J.M.

Bishop of Edmundston

« From A Bishop's Journal » (148) (20 November 1996)