

---

## A SIGN OF HOPE FOR OUR WORLD (6)

---



Following are the concluding paragraphs of the Canadian bishops' Pastoral Letter on the Eradication of Poverty. May our daily commitment bring the light of hope to those who are near to us and are impoverished. As chairman of the Bishops' Committee on Social Affairs I thank my brother bishops, especially those who are members of the committee: Archbishop Bertrand Blanchet of Rimouski, Auxiliary Bishop Nicola De Angelis of Toronto, Archbishop Marcel Gervais of Ottawa, Bishop Pierre Morrissette of Baie-Comeau, and Archbishop Peter Alfred Sutton, O.M.I., of Keewatin-Le Pas.

### THE PATHS OF HOPE

« What prompts us to write this letter is the urgent need to adopt the preferential option for the poor. The poor are our neighbours in every parish in Canada. If a civilisation is to be based on love for one's neighbour, the role of Christians is not simply to exhort but to join in the struggle for social change, as well as to reflect and pray on current social issues and on our own social responsibilities. So that we might truly become a Church that serves the poor, all Christians must know how to recognise the poor today, further the liberating work of God, work for justice, and take up the path of solidarity. Again, we invite Christian communities to live intensely the social teaching of the Church on human work: to renew periodically our commitment to socially just personnel policies, compensation systems, affirmative action policies, as well as participatory decision-making structures. Where trade unions represent workers, there is less salary differential between women and men, wages are usually higher and working conditions better, than in non-unionised workplaces. We reaffirm our call to all members of the Christian community to support, strengthen, and revitalise the contributions of the labour movement directed towards the eradication of poverty. »

### THE PROPHETIC VOICE OF THE GOSPEL

« We continue to support Christians working with the impoverished in favour of just social change. We also encourage those in Christian communities who promote the social dimension of faith among their brothers and sisters, who work with community organisations, who help the various lobbying efforts aimed at government authorities, and who participate in fasting, prayer, and public vigils as a sign of solidarity with the victims of poverty. Their efforts testify to the importance of community action as an integral part of the cultural and social change necessary to eliminate poverty. In spite of the difficulty of the situation and the seemingly small progress being made, we must derive continuing inspiration from the prophetic force of the witness of the Gospel, our source of hope for a better world. We can then meditate on the Beatitudes: "Blessed are you poor; yours is the Kingdom of God" (Luke 6:20), alongside "those who hunger and thirst for what is right: you shall be satisfied" (Matthew 5:6). »

### BISHOP MARIE-ANTOINE ROY PRIZE

It is this evening that the Diocesan Council meets to judge the nominations that have been submitted for the granting of the *Bishop Marie-Antoine Roy Prize*; and on Sunday, December 8, I shall have the pleasure of announcing the winner at the Christmas concert being held in the Clair parish church. This prize was announced last year at the closing of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary festivities as a mark of gratitude for those who are striving to make our Church devoted and vibrant. The following criteria were set, for judging winners: faith

education, fellowship, commitment, and celebration.

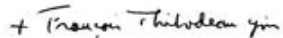
## **DIOCESAN CENTRE**

In the booklet dedicated to Bishop Fernand Lacroix and published October 20, 1994, we read the following: « Concerned that his successors would not be saddled with a debt-ridden diocese, Bishop Lacroix opted on September 19, 1971, not to restore the old bishop's residence (then situated where the Villa Desjardins now stands) or to acquire a new residence, but rather to partially renovate the retreat house which had been built in the early 1950s, and which would henceforth be known as the Diocesan Centre. In October, 1971, the Centre director moved in, a number of diocesan offices moved in towards the end of November, and Bishop Lacroix set up residence at the beginning of December. On January 2, 1972, it was open house at the Diocesan Centre, "a get-together of the diocesan family". This was truly a turning point in the lives of both the diocese and its bishop. As they visit the Centre, people quickly note that the decoration furnishings of the different rooms reflect the modesty and simplicity of their bishop. »

## **OPEN HOUSE**

I cordially invite you all to visit our Diocesan Centre on the occasion of its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, on December 1, from 2:00 to 4:30 P.M. The Centre personnel will be on hand to welcome you. Music and signing will accompany you throughout your visit. This is our humble way of expressing our deep gratitude to you. May the Diocesan Centre continue to be for all members of our beloved diocesan Church, a sign of our being one family.

See you next Sunday!



+ François Thibodeau, C.J.M.

Bishop of Edmundston

« From A Bishop's Journal » (149) (27 November 1996)