
MAY HIS SPRINGTIME COME!



Throughout the diocese we can see signs of renewal, signs of the spring of God. Several young people are preparing for their Profession of Faith, others are carefully preparing graduation ceremonies; May and June will be busy times for many of us.

COME, SPIRIT OF GOD!

As usual, I want to share with you a few of the 800 letters or so that I received from young persons preparing for Confirmation. These letters are like marvellous professions of faith in the Holy Spirit. They can help us recover in our lives what we have become through Confirmation. *« For some weeks now I have been preparing with my parents, friends, and teacher for Confirmation. We have been praying and studying together and I have learned that being confirmed is to receive a new life, the Light of God. The Holy Spirit, the Light of God will be a lamp unto our feet, and strength will sustain us. To be confirmed also means to live fully, to share one's riches, to be sent out to carry the light of Jesus and the Good News. The follow will send a protector, the Holy Spirit who will teach us and help us remember everything he has told us. We shall also be receiving the gifts of wisdom, knowledge, strength, counsel, understanding, filial love, adoration, and praise. We shall be opting to live out the project of Jesus by performing characteristic acts like acts of love, peace, and service. I am really looking forward to meet you at this grand celebration and to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. »*

BECOMING INFECTED

« I have learned that being confirmed, » writes another, « is to become infected with the love of God, to be sent out as a bearer of the light of Jesus, to make it shine bright. In the Church I become an active member responsible for a more just and a kinder world. The Holy Spirit I welcome helps me carry out the mission that Jesus has given me. » Another writes: *« I find that it is very important to be God's beloved child. I want to become a more responsible child and an active member of the Church. I believe that the Holy Spirit welcomes me with open arms. I am renewed in my faith. »* A fourth young person writes: *« To be confirmed means becoming more responsible as a Christian. It is also another step in my growing-up, and a sign that I have journeyed quite a bit. I am looking forward to this great day, because it is some event! »* And also: *« Being confirmed is a reminder that I am and shall always be a member of God's great family. Confirmation also means that each one must love others as oneself and that we must always try to do what is best. I also know that there will always be a place in my heart for the Holy Spirit. »* On behalf of the diocesan Church and in my own name I express heartfelt gratitude to these young persons, their parents, sponsors, teachers, and pastors for this excellent preparation and these memorable celebrations.

NOTRE-DAME-DU-SACRÉ-COEUR CHURCH

This week the Diocesan Council for Economic Affairs, the Diocesan Council for Pastoral Ministry, and the Priests' Senate held their regular meetings. I took that occasion to ask their advice regarding the offer made by the city of Edmundston to purchase the Notre-Dame-du-Sacré-Coeur Church building. The committees and Priests' Senate recommended that before giving their recommendations on the matter, the Notre-Dame-du-Sacré-Coeur

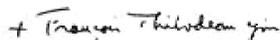
parishioners have a chance to bring forth their own suggestions in the ensuing weeks regarding what they plan to do to ensure the continuation of their parish. The next Diocesan Committee for Economic Affairs meeting is scheduled for May 20, and the Priests' Senate meeting will take place May 23.

PRIESTS' RETREAT

I am pleased to invite the priests of our diocese to take part in the annual retreat that is to be held at the Diocesan Centre from Monday, April 28, to Friday, May 2. The retreat will be facilitated by Father Claude Michaud. In his Apostolic Exhortation on Priestly Formation, Pope John Paul II writes: « *If any time is a favourable time for the Holy Spirit to help the priest grow in prayer, study, and awareness of his pastoral duties, there are nonetheless special periods for this, even when these periods have been customary and planned in advance. First there are those meetings of the bishop with his presbyterium, [His clergy] whether these meetings are liturgical, pastoral, or cultural. There are also meetings on priestly spirituality such as spiritual exercises, and days of recollection and spirituality. These are occasions for spiritual and pastoral growth, for a calmer and more prolonged prayer time, for a return to our priestly roots, for a fresher approach to the motives inspiring fidelity and pastoral vitality.* » All the priests are expected at the Diocesan Centre on Monday, April 28, by 4:00 P.M. Following supper, there will be a eucharistic celebration marking the beginning of the period of silence until Friday at noon. Like last year, there will be continuous adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the Bishop's Chapel (on Monday, from 7:00 to 9:00 P.M., and on the other days from 8:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M.). On Friday, May 2, we shall mark at both the Mass and the meal following, the following ordination anniversaries: the 60th anniversary of Father Yvon Sirois, the 45 years of Msgr. Eymard Desjardins and Fr. Alfred Ouellet, the 40 years of ordination of Fr. Lucien Lévesque and Fr. Joseph Moisan, the 35 years of Fathers Lewis Long, Almer Levasseur, and Bertrand Ouellet, the 25 years of Fr. Frédéric Poitras, the 20th anniversary of Fr. William Rice, the 15th anniversary of Fr. Pierre Thibodeau, and the 10th anniversary of Fr. Yvon Samson.

THE MSGR. JOSEPH-AURÈLE PLOURDE COUNCIL

The St. Quentin Knights of Columbus will shortly be celebrating their golden anniversary, and on that occasion their council will take the name of Archbishop Joseph-Aurèle Plourde who was assistant pastor in that parish and was the first priest from our diocese to become bishop (1964). Congratulations to our Brother Knights! Have a good week!



+ François Thibodeau
Bishop of Edmundston

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