
A VERY ACTIVE PASTORAL YEAR



The life that is felt throbbing in the hearts of our communities is the promise of a very active pastoral year. A number of organisations and committees have already resumed their activities: September offers major possibilities for starting on the right foot.

BENEFICIAL VISITS

Since August 20 I have been able to visit each one of the five deaneries, and to share with the pastors and pastoral agents a bold look at our diocesan Church, both in its positive aspects and those aspects needing improvement. All observations received are to be submitted to the Diocesan Pastoral Council which in turn shall make appropriate recommendations regarding the choice of our next pastoral priorities. What seems to stand out at this time is the solidarity existing between those involved in pastoral ministry, and the coresponsibility to be intensified between priests, religious, and lay people. On the other hand, what must be especially improved is, first and foremost, our fearlessness and creativity in reaching out to youth and adults wherever they may be, who take no part in our parish gatherings. These periods of reflection and sharing together help us rediscover our Church so as to love her better and to serve her, that she may be for all a sign of hope and unity to the people of our time.

THE BISHOP M.-A. ROY PRIZE

The selection committee for the Bishop Marie-Antoine Roy Prize is already hard at work. This diocesan merit prize was established at the time of our diocese's fiftieth anniversary, and that it bears the name of our first bishop; this prize is given to a group that has shown to be especially dynamic in our milieu, in the fields of faith education, fellowship, celebration, and the transformation of our communities. Recommendation of candidates for the prize must be received by the diocesan secretariat no later than November 15, and the prize itself - the sum of five hundred dollars - will be awarded at the Richelieu Auditorium in Grand Falls on Sunday, December 7, at 2:00 P.M. If you know of a group or organization that would be deserving of this prize, a choir, parish pastoral council, a group or association of great help and support to your milieu, do not hesitate to recommend them to us. Last year there were twenty-seven applications submitted, showing the diocese how life was vibrant throughout the diocese. The Development and Faith movement and the École de la Foi/School of Faith were the first two recipients of this newly-founded prize.

GROUP OF 1000

By mid-September 259 persons had freely contributed one hundred dollars to help in the administration of the diocesan centre and support the resource centre. I want to thank them with my whole heart for their fine support. Since its creation in March, 1996, nearly one hundred thousand dollars have been quietly donated on a voluntary basis. An income tax receipt is always sent with the letter of acknowledgement, which means that 50% of your donation to the diocesan Church to aid her in continuing her service to the diocesan community, are refunded in tax credit. You may send your donation to: *Group of 1000, Diocesan Centre, 60, rue Bouchard, Edmundston, N.B. E3V 3K1.*

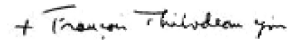
SYNOD FOR THE AMERICAS

An extraordinary assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the Americas will be held in Rome from November 16 to December 12. More than 300, from 22 bishops' conferences in North, Central, and South America will get together to reflect on the following theme: *The Encounter with Jesus Christ the Living One, Path to Conversion, Communion, and Solidarity in America*. There are three main objectives: promoting the new evangelisation throughout both continents, as an expression of episcopal communion; development of solidarity among the particular Churches in different pastoral undertakings; an in-depth study of justice-related problems and international economic relations between the different American countries, regarding the immense disparities existing between the North, the Centre, and the South. In the weeks to come I shall share with you the answers I have received to the preparatory questionnaire of this unique forthcoming event.

BISHOPS' MEETINGS

Even if a new pastoral year comprises important contacts between the deaneries and the different diocesan councils, it is also punctuated by the scheduled bishops' meetings. On September 27 and 28 I shall attend the Atlantic Bishops' Conference, in St. Johns, Newfoundland, and from October 16 to 22 I shall be at the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, being held, this year, at Cap-de-la-Madeleine, Québec. At these meetings I shall also be attending the meeting of the Bishops' Committee on Social Affairs. The Synod for the Americas will take a big part of our meeting time. All of these many meetings are quite demanding due to the fact that they are bilingual and touch on countless concerns of our daily life. They, too, contribute in shaping our Church in order to better respond to new situations and challenges, and to new spiritual and pastoral expectations.

Have a good week.



+ François Thibodeau
Bishop of Edmundston

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