



From A Bishop's Journal (230)

A Tribute to the Fathers Thériault

It was in an atmosphere filled with joy and thanksgiving that on May 24 in the Saint-Jacques church was celebrated the 40th ordination anniversary of Father Rino and Énoil Thériault and the 50th anniversary of their brother Sylvio. What follows are excerpts of the sermon I was privileged to give.

Witnesses

I invite you today to celebrate the commitments of the Fathers Thériault to the cause of the Kingdom of Jesus. Not only have they been witnesses to the Resurrection of Jesus, but they have also witnessed to his suffering: through the afflictions they have experienced in their own bodies they were open to the fact that they were given to them by Jesus. Together, through faithfulness to their mission, they have shown us important aspects of the priesthood of Jesus; they have shown us that our sovereign priest Jesus is a compassionate person, a kind and patient teacher, a suffering servant who gives up his life for others.

Father Sylvio

When I think about the life and ministry of Father Sylvio I am reminded of the following words from Michel Quoist: «*Why have you told me to love?*» And a headline in the local newspaper put it, *Father of the Poor*. Father Sylvio is an inspiration to our priests: through his weekend pastoral ministry at Saint-François, as assistant pastor at Saint Leonard, or pastor at Saint-Léonard-Parent, or through the many ministries he exercised as administrator of the Centre Éducatif d'Edmundston, professor of philosophy at Collège Maillet, chaplain at the Saint Basile Sanatorium, the Blessed Sacrament Sisters and the Edmundston Regional Hospital, Father Sylvio has always sought to show the compassion of Jesus.

Father Énoil

When I think of Father Énoil's life and ministry the word that comes to mind is "**excellence**" or still, "**perfection.**" I have been told that mediocrity and Father Énoil make very strange bedfellows! Even

before the recommendations of the Second Vatican Council, Father Énoil had a special interest in the ongoing formation of priests. With a few others, he was instrumental in the organising of "priests' Wednesdays" when all the clergy, young and older, was invited to get together to look at particular pastoral situations, to pray, and join in fellowship. I want to thank him for what he has done for the presbyterium as a whole as well as for the work he accomplished in the different parishes under his care, as assistant pastor at Assumption Parish in Grand Falls, as pastor of St-Jean-Baptiste, Green River, and as vicar general of the diocese. The witness he continues to give in his painful illness is an inspiration to all who meet him: absence of complaint, a faith-filled and hope-filled life, a life of prayer, an open and welcoming attitude, a special priestly ministry.

Father Rino

When I think of Father Rino it is the word efficient and unassuming "coordinator" that comes to mind. He, too, has shown much interest in the ongoing intellectual and spiritual formation of priests. His desire is to be the pastor of all people: he is concerned about having meaningful liturgies, spiritually satisfying religious instruction, and stimulating human relations. He has given the best of himself for the good of others through his catechetical ministry at both parish and diocesan levels, as assistant pastor at the Cathedral, and as pastor at Saint-André and Saint-Jacques. A great year-round sportsman, he exhibits the determination with which he can carry through the projects he undertakes. The Word of God has seduced him; in his innermost being there is like a burning fire, the Word of God that he has welcomed and that he desires to share in all simplicity with his brothers and sisters.

Mr. and Mrs. Thériault

Patrick Thériault and Irene Martin, the parents of our jubilarians and proud parents of fifteen children, must have been people of prayer and devotedness, of generosity and wisdom, people ever trusting in Providence, as they pursued their tasks to the best of their abilities. My gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Thériault for what they were to their children; I ask the Lord to give them in heaven the hundredfold of everything they accomplished on earth for our Church. The other family members also deserve our gratitude. Your family gatherings shows us the kind of spirit that you have: a deep desire to carry out the will of God, a sense of the Church, concern for the poor, a thirst for truth, a desire to carry out the will of God. Parents like Mr. and Mrs. Thériault and families like the Thériault Family are more than ever needed; the values they have handed still nourish us today, values such as faithfulness, solidarity, honesty, being true to one's word, justice, and peace. Values transmitted by families such as the Thériaults are the pride and wealth of many of our families.

Calls from God

It is important for us to develop in our families and parishes the desire to respond generously to the calls of God. The choices God makes are always surprising. Each one of us could tell of the surprise we have felt about some call from God. The Lord continues to call, He is constantly generous in His calls. Those of you who are gardeners know about the infinite number of seeds that the Lord gives

you. The same is true of vocations. Priests like Rino, Énoil, and Sylvio are needed in our Church, and more of them will be needed in the Church of tomorrow, to pursue our mission.

Have a good week!

+ François Thibodeau ym

+ François Thibodeau, C.J.M.
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