
MESSAGES SENT AND RECEIVED



On the occasion of the third Diocesan Eucharistic Congress which was held in the Upper Madawaska Deanery on June 12, 13, and 14, I sent three messages to those taking part and received one from the youth of our Church.

TO THE SICK

I am deeply united to you in both thought and prayer. In my heart and spirit I experience with you these times of faith and hope. And with you I hear our loving Saviour speak the words of compassion, « *Come to me, all you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.* » [Matthew 11:28] You who have just received the anointing of the sick have been given a sign of Jesus' love for you. You are living signs of the love of God to your families and your parishes. In the Eucharist you share in the suffering and resurrection of Jesus. I bless you and all those who are with you. May the Virgin Mary and her divine Son fill you with their blessings.

TO THE PENITENTS

With you who are taking part in the communal celebration of penance I want to thank the Lord for the wonders of his forgiveness and reconciliation. You are receiving a sign of the love of Jesus for each and everyone of us. In your own milieu you are called to become in turn living signs of the goodness and forgiveness of God, through the way you live and act. May the Lord make you into instruments of his peace and reconciliation especially in your families and parishes. May you realise in your own persons how the love of the Lord is from age to age, and how we are very privileged to have inherited the Eucharist and family life.

TO THE YOUTH

I address myself in a very special way to those among you who have taken seriously the third diocesan Eucharistic Congress. Not only are you our hope for tomorrow but you are enriching our world at this very moment. Your vitality and enthusiasm, your outlook on life, your dreams and your plans help us envision a brighter future. I want to tell you that with Jesus it is not to a dead-end that your life is going, but a path that opens up to the light. Your presence and what you have to offer are vital for the building up of our communities. I repeat to you: I am full of confidence in you. If it has not already happened, may you live a very special experience with Jesus, the Risen One, the Living One. I hope that you catch yourself saying under your breath, « Oh to find your presence in my life, to keep my lamp lit, with you to choose to trust, to love and to know we are loved. »

May these hours you are spending together help you discover the beautiful birthright that is ours: the Eucharist and our families.

MISSION OF YOUTH

At the Eucharistic Congress's closing Mass I received a message from the young people: « *It is with joy that we, the youth of the Edmundston Diocese, have taken part in the Eucharistic Congress preparatory to the jubilee of the*

year 2000. The Youth Rally was a great occasion for us to get together for fellowship and for the purpose of discovering, in our sharings, the riches that we all have within us. These sharings dealt with the Church and the family. By reflecting together on these topics, quite a few ideas were expressed, and we are happy to share them with you for the benefit of upbuilding our Church.

STRONG POINTS

**Here are the strong points that have attracted us young people, in the last few years: First of all, we realise that our diocese is concerned about youth and that it is looking for ways to reach them. We appreciate the efforts of our priests to draw closer to the people and make of their churches places of welcome to all. Besides, we see that the lay people are more involved in their parishes. Religion today is no longer pushed on people, but more and more it is by choice that people commit themselves, and this is a challenge to us. We are also happy to see that things are being done for the sake of the Christian unity. We are prod of our Pope who is a true witness to the Gospel, who loves the youth, and who is fearless. He calls us to be fearless in the face of the challenges of our world today. Following his call, the Church is becoming more and more missionary by supporting those organisations that look after the less fortunate. And the pastoral restructuring that was started this year shows hat the Church really wants to grow.*

YEARNINGS

**Secondly, we realise that generally speaking youth need education in faith and ritual. We often feel that homilies do not reach us at all. We want to understand the Word of God in a concrete way so as to put it into practice in our daily lives. We often have the feeling that each one is living his religion for himself. The Church of the year 2000 must look more like a family where everyone, young and adult, will be able to feel at home. This Church will have to show more respect for differences, so as to draw closer to the mission that Christ gave to his Church.*

INVOLVEMENT

**Finally, here is what we are ready to do in the form of being involved in our diocesan Church. In Sunday celebrations, for example, several young people would like to offer their talents as choir members, readers, or decorators; we would like to participate either individually or in a group. You know, very often all that you have to do is ask... We know that the Church needs us and we want to help in building it up. In ending, we thank the organisers of the Eucharistic Congress for having given us a share in the activities. This initiative shows that the Church is ready to make us enter into the new millennium. »*

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Bishop of Edmundston

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