
BISHOP MARIE-ANTOINE ROY AWARDS



On Sunday, December 6, I had the pleasure of presenting the 1998 Bishop Marie-Antoine Roy Awards for the third year in a row. The ceremony took place at the St-Quentin church. This prize is awarded to groups and organisations which have shown outstanding devotion within our Christian communities. And I heartily congratulate the Restigouche choirs for their Christmastime songs.

THIRTY-FIVE NOMINATIONS

In this year marking the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Bishop Marie-Antoine Roy, the Edmundston diocese's first bishop, we want to express our esteem to him and assure him of our desire to continue in the spiritual heritage he has bequeathed us. The thirty-five nominations for the Prize are a reminder of the remarkable spirit that animates us. Because of this it was no easy task for the Diocesan Pastoral Council to choose a winner, but choose they did and I am grateful to them. And so, on to the nominations and the winner of the 1998 award.

EDUCATION IN THE FAITH

In the area of faith education I want to congratulate the diocesan services team, the religious education committees of the Grand Falls Deanery, especially that of St-Georges Parish and the parents of the Grades seven and eight students of Drummond, who have really taken their religious education to heart; they are certainly role models to be followed, in the years to come. I also congratulate and thank the Centre de Foi et Intériorité of St-Quentin for the spiritual renewal it offers the Restigouche region. And my gratitude, also, to the formation team of our diocesan Seminary, a sign of hope for our Church.

CELEBRATION

In the area of celebration, my thanks and congratulations to the church choirs throughout our diocese, especially those of the Upper Madawaska Deanery, which thrilled us throughout the 1998 Eucharistic Congress. Like you, I was truly amazed at the immense work done by the Eucharistic Congress Steering Committee of Upper Madawaska. I want to note, here, the remarkable zeal of the organising committee of the priestly anniversaries of the three Thériault brothers, at St-Jacques; I also note with gratitude the pastoral agents of our diocese who are contributing to the formation of dynamic pastoral teams.

FELLOWSHIP

In the area of fellowship must certainly be noted all those gestures of goodwill and fellowship that one sees throughout the diocese, especially in the serving of after-funeral meals. Here I want to mention the devotedness of the Assumption Parish (Grand Falls) volunteers, the Welcome Committee of St-Michel Parish (Drummond), the Entraide Funéraire Group (St-Jacques), the Solidarity Committee (St-François), the St-André Clothing Depot, the Diocesan Federation of the Christian Women's Movement, [Fédération diocésaine du Mouvement des Femmes chrétiennes"] Southern Victoria Daughters of Isabella Circle 995 and St-André Circle 1283, the Marie-Jeunesse Family, the Eau Vive community, the Immaculate Conception Parish's Faith and Light Movement, the

Parrainage Tiers-Monde, without forgetting all those volunteers involved in hospital ministry, notably those at the Grand Falls Regional Hospital.

TRANSFORMING ONE'S MILIEU

In the service area, in the endeavour of transforming one's milieu, I want to congratulate and thank all those who are committed on a daily basis to looking after the well-being of their brothers and sisters. I note here the work accomplished by the Pastoral Formation Services of both the Francophone and Anglophone Sectors; thanks to these services, we are able to get new pastoral agents for our Church. Also noteworthy is the work of the Diocesan Spirituality Centre and the Université du Troisième Âge, along with the discreet but indispensable Birthright organisation.

HONOURABLE MENTION

I also want to praise in a special way five organisations which are especially involved in our milieu: the Blue Bell and Grand Falls (Assumption Parish) Sunday School groups. Their example and perseverance are a great stimulus for our diocesan Church as a whole. Three deaneries were also given Honourable Mention: I note the marvelous work of the - in alphabetical order - Restigouche, Southern Victoria, and Upper Madawaska Deaneries. Thanks to their commitment, creativity, perseverance and persistence, they were able to pass through difficult times and come up with answers regarding the pastoral readjustments now taking place. Theirs is an outstanding taking-in-hand of themselves, a beautiful collaboration between priests, sisters, and lay people.

THE 1998 PRIZE

And now it is my distinct pleasure to announce the 1998 Bishop Marie-Antoine Roy Prize. It is a great honour for this parish community which has welcomed the parish youth, and for these youth to implicate themselves for several years now in the life of the parish: I am referring here to the choir and young people's liturgical movement group of the St-Léonard Parish. On behalf of our diocesan Church I thank and congratulate all these groups which were nominated and all who have taken part. Thanks to all of you, our beloved Church is ever more vibrant, fraternal, and missionary.

+ François Thibodeau

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Bishop of Edmundston

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