
1999 BISHOP MARIE-ANTOINE ROY AWARD



At the festivities marking the end of our diocese's fiftieth anniversary, December 8, 1995, the Bishop Marie-Antoine Roy Award was created in gratitude to our Church for the groups, associations, organisations, committees, and services in our milieu. Thanks to all these agencies, there is a lot of life among us, the envy of several dioceses.

HOME-BASED RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

After thanking the Balladins du Dimanche choral group, the St-Louis-Maillet Vocal Ensemble, and the Notre-Dame-des-Sept-Douleurs Church Choir who together gave the memorable Christmas Concert during which was attributed the 1999 Bishop Marie-Antoine Roy Award, I now want to introduce to you the 24 candidates which the Diocesan Pastoral Council attentively considered. What was noticed was the great vitality in the field of home-based and parish-based religious education, and throughout the diocese we feel the commitment of parents and parishes to making Christ Jesus better known in their midst. The *Grand Falls Deanery*, *St. Michel Parish*, *Drummond*, and *St. Georges Parish* were especially pointed out.

DIOCESAN SERVICES

It was also noted that the diocesan services were very active; mention was made of the *diocesan secretariat team* and to the *diocesan website*, which help us to know better what is happening in the different deaneries. This information helps create a Church-as-communion. The same is said regarding the "*Au rythme de l'Église*" radio programme. Members of the diocese's *five deaneries* (Edmundston, Grand Falls, Upper Madawaska, Restigouche, Southern Victoria) are especially commended for their effort in implementing the new pastoral restructuring; the *Restigouche Deanery* is especially noted, in this regard, for taking up the challenge and providing itself with the appropriate services. The work carried out by the *Diocesan Council for Economic Affairs*, the faithful work of *parish economic affairs committees* which contribute in the parish management of diocesan properties, and the work accomplished by the *Group of One Thousand* for the maintenance of the Diocesan Centre, all were noted with gratitude. And the discrete but important work accomplished by the *Pastoral Ministry Formation Service* is also noted.

QUALITY SERVICES

How can we remain indifferent to the hopes raised by our diocesan seminary and the solidarity promoted among us by Development and Peace? The *Diocesan Seminary Team* guides and supports nine seminarians, and it has published an excellent information pamphlet; the team has also remained attentive to the situation of our young priests. *Development and Peace* has been the diocesan conscience regarding the plight of Third World countries and the devastation wrought by Hurricane Mitch, the Kosovo and the Eastern Timor wars. We can be rightfully proud of the work accomplished by *Centre Sérénité* in its ten years' existence; proud also of the *Marriage Preparation Services* of our diocese, as they journey with some two hundred loving couples during the year. And how can we not say a grateful "Thank you" to the *Sisters of Notre-Dame-du-Sacré-Coeur* who for the last seventy-five years have been working among us? And what about *Birthright*, as it witnesses to the greatness of all human life?

OF LIFE AND BEYOND

There is life everywhere; choirs and choral groups invite us to sing. There was praise for the *Notre-Dame-des-Sept-Douleurs Church choir* and the "*Viens-Chanter*" group of St-Jacques Parish. Thanks and congratulations are addressed to the parishioners of *Saint-Martin-de-Restigouche Parish* for liturgical services, to the *Marie-Jeunesse* religious family for its enthusiasm and zest for life, and to the *Steering Committee of the Fourth Diocesan Eucharistic Congress*, held in the Grand Falls Deanery. And in difficult times solidarity is there: proof is the *After-funeral Luncheon Committee of Saint-André Parish* and the *Entraide funéraire of Saint-Jacques Parish*.

A DIFFICULT CHOICE

You can imagine the difficult choices which the Diocesan Pastoral Council had to make. Following sharing and reflection, the Diocesan Pastoral Council unanimously endorsed three Honourable Mention awards and one 1999 Prize. So it is my distinct pleasure to declare that both the French and English *Pastoral Formation Programmes* are granted the First Honourable Mention; Second Honourable Mention goes to the "*Au rythme de l'Église*" radio programme, and Third Honourable Mention goes to the *parishioners of Saint-Martin-de-Restigouche Parish* for their liturgical services.

The winner of the 1999 Bishop Marie-Antoine-Roy Award is *the Marriage Preparation Services, French and English Sectors*. Congratulations to all who were nominated for the Award, and congratulations to the winners! I gratefully thank you on behalf of the Edmundston Diocese Church.



+ François Thibodeau
Bishop of Edmundston

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