
"LET THE SPIRIT BURST FORTH!" (5)



We must be very grateful to the Holy Spirit who does not cease to work his wonders among us! In this final excerpts from my Pentecost pastoral letter I join with you in expressing this gratitude.

RICHNESS OF OUR PRESBYTERIUM

I often hear the comment, "We hardly have any priests left; there are about fifty left and they are getting older and older." Yes, but this is a richness in itself! And the Lord has just added another to our numbers, Father Ivan Thériault. Then there are seven aspirants to priestly orders. Of the 50 priests of our presbyterium, one third are at work full-time in parishes, and this is a richness, too. There are also the wonderful occasional ministry of our retired priests, who are so greatly appreciated. Imagine all the potential there is: in the Lord's eyes and in my own, the priests are of inestimable value. Their witness of life, prayer life, sufferings, concerns, and friendships are priceless.

MEN OF THE DEEP

[From the Common of Apostles. Tr. *In Men of the Deep, Cast in Us a Desire for God*. Pastoral Letter to the Priests of the Diocese of Edmundston, February 18, 2000, page 5]

Fashioned by the Word of the Lord, passed through the sifter of his Passion,
And having overcome all fear, Apostles of Jesus, of his Church,
You are the foundation which nothing can shake.

He makes of you his workers, and surrenders himself to you;
He, the architect, the work site manager becomes
the cornerstone holding you up, living stone and daily bread
For whomever proclaims and offers him.

What intoxication, pure and sober, catches you?
What folly of love and of fire?
What wisdom more deranged than the wind?
The Spirit breathes upon you, men of the deep.
Cast over us the thirst for God, and set us back
on our way.

TEN YEARS AFTER THE DIOCESAN SYNOD

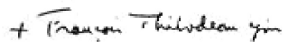
The unforgettable Diocesan Synod which was held from 1987 to 1990 helped the Holy Spirit speak to our Church in a very special way. What remains with us, of these words of the Spirit? What directions, what recommendations will especially mark us? Would it not be a good thing during the year 2000-2001 pastoral year to take stock of this ecclesial gesture? I was not a part of this Synod, but I sought to seek constant inspiration from it. I believe that it would be good if at the parish, deanery, and diocesan levels we referred to these recommendations and eventually adjusted ourselves to the new ecclesial context which is ours. The urgency of evangelisation, pastoral ministry to youth and to families are paths which we cannot sidestep. What means are we to employ, to promote evangelisation? What do we do to reach our children and youth? How are we to reach out to families, so as to better respond to their expectations?

TURNUED TO THE FUTURE

In 1999-2000 our priorities had been the setting up of parish pastoral teams and the promotion of home-based religious education. If we evaluate the 1987-1990 Diocesan Synod we shall have happy surprises. In these recommendations there are a few which deal with the urgency of a bold and dynamic vocation ministry: this in itself could be a year-long project. Let us let the Spirit surge forth, let us be led by him, he will surely guide us to a safe haven. He is always ahead of us. May the Virgin Mary who welcomed the Holy Spirit so well in herself and responded so positively to God's project for us find us ever available to carrying out God's will in all things.

AN UNFINISHED LETTER

Dear brothers and sisters of the diocese, I have called to your attention several events which have marked our beloved Church during the 1999-2000 pastoral year. I would sincerely hope that as a first step you would complete "the list," make an inventory of the wonders which have been unfolding in your milieu during this period, where you have seen the Holy Spirit at work. And secondly, I wish that you would take the time to thoroughly study one or the other of the Edmundston Diocesan Synod recommendations, to see what has been done. Thirdly, I would request you to specify, with your brothers and sisters of the Christian community, one or two pastoral priorities to be implemented in the next few months. Finally, I urge you to let your heart speak a prayer of gratitude and awe for everything that the Spirit of Jesus has accomplished in you. *"All-loving and all-lovable heart of my Saviour, be heart of my heart, soul of my soul, spirit of my spirit, life of my life, and the first principle of all my thoughts, words, and actions, of all of my soul's faculties, and of all my inner and outer senses."* [Saint John Eudes]



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