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## ***"It Is Good To Be Here"***

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It was such a pleasure for me to preside once again the Eucharist at Edmundston's annual Foire Brayonne, on August 6. I congratulate and thank all those who made this event the success it was. Following are excerpts from the homily I gave, on the occasion.

### **AMAZEMENT AT THE UNEXPECTED**

*"It is good to be here!"* These words were spoken by the apostle Peter when he was on Mount Tabor with James and John (Matthew 17:3; Mark 9:5), at the time of the transfiguration of Jesus. We can repeat these words today because we, too, are invited in this Eucharistic celebration to welcome Jesus in our own lives to be transformed by him. It is good to be here in the diocese of Edmundston, as friends, as tourists, as visitors; together we are living important moments of friendship and fellowship. It is good to be here in this jubilee year 2000, a year so full of grace for each and every one of us.

### **AN UNFORGETTABLE MEETING**

On Mount Tabor, that day, the encounter with Jesus was fantastic and unforgettable. The apostles had never experienced such an event, Jesus showing himself to them in a different, marvellous way which had never been seen before. The apostles had experienced all kinds of events with Jesus, and they would live even more of them, both glorious and sorrowful. We only have to read the gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. All these unheard-of experiences are enough to make your head spin; after years of very ordinary happenings. We only have to recall the thirty years of Jesus' hidden life at Nazareth; nothing extraordinary happened there until Jesus was thirty years old and more. But in two or three years things had changed a lot and events made life more stressful day by day: days of betrayal and anguish, of denial and crucifixion would soon come. And Jesus wanted to show his disciples beforehand the glory which would be his with the Father. And it is at that moment that he was transfigured, that his clothes became dazzling white; Elijah and Moses joined him, and a voice was heard which said, *"This is my Son, the beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to Him!"* (Matthew 17:5) - just like the voice which was heard at his baptism in the Jordan (Matthew 3:17). Peter was delighted: *"Rabbi, it is good to be here; let us make three dwellings..."* (Mark 9:5).

### **TRANSFIGURED LIVES**

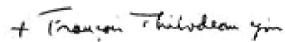
It is good to be with Jesus, today: he tells us that he will be with us to the end of time. Whenever two or three are gathered in his name, he is there in their midst. Jesus is with us just as he was on Mount Tabor. It is really good to be here, to follow Jesus and be his disciples. Our lives would be transfigured, if in our celebrations we truly met Jesus; our lives would be like that of Jesus, they would be beatitude lives - men and women of humble heart, men and women full of kindness, generosity, seekers after justice, full of mercy, and peacemakers. Perhaps it shall not be like the miracle on Mount Tabor, but a slow and deep steady transformation. There can be no true encounter with Jesus without a deep transformation of the heart and mind. Proof is all the people who came up to Jesus who did not let themselves be transformed by him. But look at the Apostles: after the denial, year after year following Pentecost, they were all transformed, touched by the Spirit, by the spirit of life which is not a spirit of fear or uneasiness but one of daring and enthusiasm.

## ABIDING PRESENCE

If in our celebrations we but took notice of the acting presence of Jesus in our lives and in that of our community, what changes would take place before our very eyes! Let us let the Spirit flow: he dwells in our Church, our world, our humanity. Through his Holy Spirit, Jesus transfigures the whole of humanity; through his Holy Spirit Jesus is beginning to transform our world into a new earth. Through his Holy Spirit, Jesus transfigures the whole of humankind: all people are called to become his disciples, and to love one another as he loved us. If we, too, want to experience the same joy Peter, James, and John had, let us set up a Tabor meeting ourselves! This Mount of Transfiguration can take the guise of a chance encounter with a friend or a sick person; it could be an hour given over to religious instruction to a child or youth desiring to meet Jesus, or still, a conversation with someone on Jesus or his Church. This Tabor meeting can be experienced through the many commitments we have to our families, our milieu, and our parish: an encounter with, a contemplation of the Living God.

## HELPFUL ENCOUNTERS

The New Testament is replete with accounts of encounters with Christ, encounters which changed people's lives. There is the Samaritan woman who tells Jesus, *"Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty again"* (John 4:15). Zacchaeus the tax collector returns the stolen property he had; Mary of Magdala, apostle to the apostles, witness of Christ's resurrection and herald of the event to the disciples. The disciples at Emmaus recognise Jesus risen from the dead, and Paul's life is radically transformed on the road to Damascus: from persecutor that he was, he becomes the Apostle of the Gentiles. Everyone has had an encounter with Christ. Unfortunately, many of Jesus' contemporaries saw and heard him without being receptive to his word. We, too, are called to open our hearts and that of others to the grace of Christ. We encounter him both as individuals and as a community. We can also count on his mother Mary, the sure way of meeting Christ. It was through Mary as well as through the poor and suffering to whom Jesus identified that many American nations came to him, and it is in the same way that we, too, can encounter him today. An encounter with Christ incites us to change mentality, to be in solidarity with the poor of the world. Throughout this new pastoral year, may we encounter Christ Jesus and repeat with Saint Peter: "It is really good to be here!"



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