
LET US BE PEACEMAKERS AT ALL COST!



On September 24 of this year, at their annual meeting the Catholic Bishops of Canada addressed a pastoral message to the Canadian politicians and the people of God, urging them to be peacemakers at all cost. «*The tragic and violent events of September 11, 2001, have very profoundly upset us. Throughout all the dioceses and parishes of our country we expressed our deepest condolences, prayers and solidarity to all who are directly or indirectly afflicted by these terrorist acts. In order to confront the world's evil, our faith demands that in all things we develop a spirit of forgiveness and mercy, to be present to those who suffer, and to suggest paths of hope to all who live in fear and uncertainty. Those responsible for these attacks must be brought to trial in full respect of international human and humanitarian rights. Nevertheless, in order to serve the human community, our country need to use prudence and moderation, rather than engage in solutions calling for violence. From this viewpoint we support Prime Minister Jean Chrétien who in his September 17 declaration committed Canada to undertake no action which would not be guided by a spirit of wisdom and perseverance founded on our common values and lifestyle. The actual challenge to Canadian society is identical to that made to the first Roman Christian communities to whom St. Paul the Apostle writes: 'Do not be conquered by evil but conquer evil with good.'*» [Romans 12,21. CCCB text Tr. L.G.]

WYD 2002

Throughout the week-long Cornwall meeting the environment itself reminded us of the forthcoming World Youth Days, a major challenge to the Church in Canada, in the coming months. The Pilgrimage of the Cross throughout the dioceses is an invitation to people throughout the land to rally together to experience in depth these days of fellowship and solidarity with these young people who want to enter further into the Christian faith, and to share it with others. This fall marks an intensive registration drive for attending the WYD, hence this is a most important time for our Diocese. Every youth aged 16 to 35 can register in his or her parish, at the rectory, or at the Diocesan Centre (735-5578), with Mrs. Manon Bourgoin. Through the agency of the bishops' conferences of different countries and the different youth ministry organisations, every effort is directed to making the WYD 2002 an unforgettable success. Pope John Paul II has set the theme: "You are the salt of the earth, you are the light of the world." The Pope really believes that today's young people are capable of giving a direction to the world we live in and to pass on our deepest values. He never tires reminding young people that they have it in them to become the saints of the new millennium. By citing the witness of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, he incites them to find around them role models of life and holiness.

SYNOD 2001

Pope John Paul II convened an ordinary synod of bishops which is already meeting in Rome until October 27, this year. There are four Canadian bishops among the 300 participants; they are Bishops Pierre Morissette of Baie-Comeau, Raymond Lahey of St. George, Nfld., Gilles Cazabon of St.-Jérôme, and James Weisgerber of Winnipeg. Referring to the Synod theme which is *The Bishop, A Servant of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Hope of the World*, the Canadian delegates will bring up the expectations of the people of God regarding bishops, the spirituality of bishops, the mission of bishops to be witnesses of the mercy of God, and relations of the Holy See with diocesan bishops. All participants were unanimous in stressing the quality of the Roman working paper and the presentations of our brother bishops.

NEW HEADS

Archbishop Luigi Ventura, the new Apostolic Nuncio, spent a few days with us. We were all quite impressed by his youth and his simplicity. Following the policy of alternating presidency of the Bishops' Conference between Anglophones and Francophones, Bishop Jacques Berthelet of Saint-Jean-Longueuil was elected the new president and Bishop Brendan O'Brien of St. Johns was elected vice president. All the national and sector commissions also elected new chairmen and members. For my part, I have been elected chairman of the Francophone Commission on Social Communications, while maintaining my seat with the Development and Peace Organisation.

VOCATION MINISTRY

Besides reports of the Conference's activities, whether in liturgy, ecumenism, Christian education, or social affairs, much time was allocated to the question of vocations. For the first time in history, a continental congress on vocations will be held in Montreal, April 18 to 21, 2002. This conference will draw over a thousand people from Canada and the United States. Close attention will be paid to the actual state of vocations to ordained ministries and to consecrated life. During 2001, there will be preliminary meetings in the different dioceses, regions, or communities to reflect together on the future of vocations to the ordained ministry and to consecrated life in its many forms, and to prepare an action plan for the future.

NEW MILLENNIUM

Pope John Paul's beautiful letter on the new millennium was the subject of rich exchange among the bishops, most notable being that of Cardinal Jean-Claude Turcotte. The encounter with the living Christ is the point of departure of any pastoral endeavour. This encounter is also a call to holiness. We must rediscover the power of the Word of God, welcome it in our lives, and proclaim it. We must also rediscover the sacraments of the Eucharist and of Reconciliation. A spirituality of communion must be at the forefront of all ecclesial structures (committees, councils) as well as of each activity of ours: we shall be recognised as disciples of the Lord by the love we have for one another. In such a context, it is good that the relics of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus will be making the round of our dioceses, in the coming months. This is a very special opportunity for us to recognise the spirituality of this great missionary saint who claimed that "My vocation is Love!" May 2001 continue to stimulate us to deeply experience the Millennium's first year!

+ François Thibodeau

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Bishop of Edmundston

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