
FOR THE HOPE OF THE WORLD (2)



On the occasion of my episcopal ordination, January 9, I shared with you the reflections of Bishops Raymond Lahey and Pierre Morissette at the Synod of Bishops which was held in Rome, last October. Bishop Lahey spoke about the bishop as a sign of Jesus, and about God having visited his people. Bishop Morissette pointed out how the bishop must be a man of faith and vision, a man of communion and compassion.

TWO PASSIONS

The Bishop: Servant of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the Hope of the World: this was the theme of the 2001 Synod of Bishops. It was on this subject that Bishop Gilles Cazabon, O.M.I., of St-Jérôme, Québec, spoke of the bishop's 'two passions' which are at the heart of his spirituality, giving it form and vitality. To live with Christ and to be in solidarity with the men and women of his era. The bishop's spirituality has its meaning only as it develops in the midst of the people confided to his care. Who says spirituality says inner movement, conviction, life-giving force which gives human action the quality of witness. All spirituality arises and develops in the newness of the Holy Spirit in the very experience of each person, formed of the many and varied human relations where the presence of God is revealed. In a pluralistic society where there are people of so many different cultures, traditions, beliefs, and values, the discovery of Christ calls on the bishop to bring the perennial Gospel to other worlds and cultures, and this calls for research and renewal; a simple repetition of yesterday's words is no longer sufficient to proclaim the good news of the coming of God among us. [Cf. Most Rev. Gilles Cazabon, O.M.I., *The Bishop: Pilgrim with Christ and with His People*, Summary, Ottawa, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 02 October 2001.]

TO NEW CHALLENGES, NEW COLLABORATIONS

Referring to the call of Pope John Paul II for a new evangelization, one that is new in its enthusiasm, its methods and expression, Archbishop V. James Weisgerber of Winnipeg pointed out that the Church was faced with a totally new situation. Approaching the question from the angle of primacy and collegiality, the bishop suggested that there is an imbalance in their exercise, and this imbalance undermines the Church's evangelizing mission and can also give rise to problems both within and outside the Church. The diocesan bishop must be respected for his authority, and he must be consulted in such a way that he can make his views known to the Church's central authorities. Bishops' conferences must have enough latitude to fully carry out their pastoral role. This calls for a courageous and prudent examination of our structures and instruments of collegiality, as well as for a willingness to make the adjustments required by the new evangelization. [Cf. Most Rev. V. James Weisgerber, *An Exercise of Primacy and Collegiality That Serves Evangelization in the Local Church*, Summary, Ottawa, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 09 October 2001.]

MIGRATORY MOVEMENTS

Taking account of the difficulties which the emigration of faithful from the Middle-Eastern Churches to the West, Bishop Khoury, Eparch of the Maronite Church in Canada, stated that the bishop of the host country has a major role to play, in these communities. Bishop Khoury, himself a native of Lebanon but now in Montreal, explained that the immigration has had dramatic effects on populations and has caused disarray

both among the people remaining in the homeland and those who leave to settle down in countries that were hitherto unknown to them. If immigrants from the Churches of the Orient come with few material belongings, they bear with them a rich spiritual and religious heritage that may be enriching for the Western Churches.. In fact, these difficult times may be just the occasion for an exchange of spiritual gifts between the Churches of the East and of the West, a true expression of communion. [Cf. Most Rev. Joseph Khoury, *In the Midst of Migratory Movements, the Bishop, Sacrament of Unity within the Diversity of Cultures and Ecclesial Traditions*, Summary, Ottawa, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 08 October 2001.]

EXTRAORDINARY COMMUNION

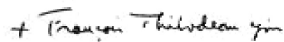
At the end of the Synod session, the Canadian delegates feel that they experienced an extraordinary sense of communion. According to them, this communion expressed itself in many ways with the Holy Father and the other Synod participants, as well as with the other Churches represented at the Synod, and the faithful in Canada. They wrote: "This meeting has strengthened the certainty that whatever the problems we come up against, whether they wrench us or not, there are brothers and sisters who walk with the Lord and with us also. We have shared our dreams, our ideas and our viewpoints to advise the Holy Father and in this way to guide the Church, that it better serve the people of God in their daily activities."

GO FORTH IN HOPE!

In a document titled *Go Forth in Hope!*, the Canadian delegates unhesitatingly declare: "With grateful hearts we renew our commitment to be messengers of the Good News of Jesus Christ. We commit ourselves to being servants of the Gospel of Jesus for the hope of the world. We desire to go forth and to be daring and creative so that our Churches experience a renewed vitality. We call on all Christians in Canada to see themselves as full partners in this renewal of our commitment. By a happy coincidence, on October 7, during the Synod, Mother Émilie Tavernier-Gamelin, foundress of the Sisters of Providence, a Canadian religious congregation, was beatified. What greater homage can we render to all those who built the Canadian Church, and what greater inheritance can we give to those who come after us than to renew our commitment to serve our brothers and sisters."

EPISCOPAL RENEWAL

Having recently celebrated the anniversary of my episcopal ordination, and united with my brother bishops for the hope of the world, I too, renew my commitment to serve all my brothers and sisters of the beloved Church of Edmundston which has been given to my care. With the grace of God, I hope to continue announcing that *His love is from age to age!*



+ François Thibodeau
Bishop of Edmundston

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