
An “Omnium” School, Pastoral and Work Year!



With minds still fresh with the Canadian Omnium which was held in Edmundston for the golf amateur championships, I want to wish to everyone, students, workers and people involved in pastoral work, a 2002-2003 pastoral year much like the Omnium itself!

A BEAUTIFUL SITE

What strikes one upon entering the Edmundston Golf Course is the beauty of the place: beautiful trees, beautiful flowers, manicured lawns, cleanliness all around. I wish that everyone's workplace be as beautiful! May our school yards, mill yards, church yards and churches be as beautiful and inspirational! Nature is so beautiful, in the three counties of the Edmundston diocese, it is worth pointing it out: the Lord has really shown us His favour by gracing us with all these forests, lands, hills, and rivers. Respecting and protecting this environment is, to my mind, a first step on the road to a wonderful and unforgettable year. If it is possible to have this for a sports competition, it seems to me that it is all the more required in those places where people of all ages and conditions spend seemingly endless hours, days, weeks, and months. Taking care of the environment is something we must do communally. We can thank all those who built our schools and churches amidst beautiful surroundings, and we can be grateful to the people and groups that continue to look after them. An example of this is the Cité des Jeunes Regional High School in Edmundston, where trees were planted on the occasion of the school's thirtieth anniversary: What a good idea this was, a priceless planting for present and future generations. Let us take a closer look at our religious buildings: they are often set in an outstanding and inspiring decor. Even in industrial sites there is concern for respecting the environment. Such an attitude guarantees everybody's well-being.

PEOPLE'S ATTITUDES

Reaching the golf course I quickly ran into the Omnium's organisers, spectators, volunteers, and golfers picked for the tournament. Even if an omnium is something serious, the people I met did not seem to take themselves too seriously, though! They all appeared relaxed, happy, friendly, and full of life. This brought me to hope for such an atmosphere at school, in the workplace, and in the church. It would be so enriching to meet together as true brothers and sisters, in an atmosphere of friendliness and friendship, on a level playing field where everyone can share their knowledge and techniques with one another, in simplicity and wisdom. If competition is essential in an omnium, there is a way of doing so that is less distressful and humiliating. If in our pastoral work we promote the collegiality and coresponsibility of lay people, priests, and religious working together at establishing a kingdom of justice and peace, there is more and more of a true partnership in our work places and centres of education. This is all to the good, and it is productive, as each one brings to the other a special something. Youth brings its young age full of enthusiasm, eagerness, courage, and wide-eyed wonder; adulthood offers the fruit of its experience and its wisdom, the contemplative brings the results of his or her deep search for God, and the worker, the satisfaction of work well done. Even if at the Edmundston Omnium the players were mostly young, there were a few older ones who had no greater pleasure than to share the stories of their own long hours of preparation and learning. I am sure that by respecting the environment of our workplace school, or church, we develop unconditional respect for all people we come in contact with, thus making the workplace a more enjoyable "office," a place for invaluable experiences of friendship. May the school, the workplace and the church be places full of vitality, where all are

friendly, welcome, and happy.

DISCIPLINE, SILENCE, ENERGY

Caps, t-shirts and posters reminded all the population of what was taking place. Several t-shirts carried public messages; one listed the stages in the training of a good sportsman: discipline, discipline, discipline! That was the secret. I think that with most of the players, it was the imposed discipline that had brought them this far, to the national tournament itself. What struck me, though, was the silence that reigned all through the tournament. Several volunteers walked through the course, not with loud voices or loudspeakers, but carrying signs calling for “quiet,” and with the names of the players, scores, etc. One could have heard a fly, in this sacred silence. The spectators themselves were very disciplined, and in this, too, we can be inspired. It is not always in calling out orders or in making all kinds of speeches that one is better understood. Whether in church, in school, or at work, rules and codes of ethics have a greater chance of being followed from within when they are given in a healthy atmosphere to people who are receptive and who are inner directed towards the same short-term goal.

WHAT WILL REMAIN OF THE OMNIUM?

If the people of Edmundston remembered the 1956 Omnium, its first, they and people of the other provinces will long remember the 2002 Omnium, because of its specialness to many. In the same way, my wish would be that all who are in school, at work, or in church have a like feeling, with study, work, and prayer being truly eventful happenings in their lives. I would even say – sing, rather! – “You are there among us, in the midst of our lives, you are the source of our living and being, Lord Jesus Christ!” Happy 2002-2003 Omnium to one and all, this is my message for this new pastoral year. enthusiasm!

+ François Thibodeau

+ François Thibodeau, C.J.M.
Bishop of Edmundston

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