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## WITH CAP IN HAND, FOR ONE LAST TIME!



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As the Diocesan financial Campaign draws to a close, I come once again with cap in hand to those of you who have not yet given to the campaign. We are very close to reaching our goal, but we have not received your gift, which could make all the difference. It is not to the past that we must look: we must courageously look to the future. Your gift will help us set up religious and faith education programmes for both youth and adults, and establish family and youth ministries. Your gift will help in the formation of parish pastoral agents, and help parishes respond to their particular needs. Please help us reach our goal; you shall be among the beneficiaries.

### MARVEL

With you I marvel at the generosity of the people of the diocese. Like the many drops of water that eventually cause rivers to overflow their banks in the spring, contributions coming in from the parishes help bring more life to our Church. If I marvel at the generosity of those who have given three thousand, ten thousand, twenty-five thousand and even fifty thousand dollars, I am also grateful for the many gifts of ten, twenty, one hundred, and one thousand dollars. When we realise that these gifts are made according to the donor's capability, that they are made from the heart, they make all the difference. I know that all the gifts we have received come from generous souls who love their fellow men and women and the Church. I can state unequivocally that these people who support our campaign have the Church community at heart. Besides, there are some among them who do not necessarily share our beliefs, but who sincerely desire that some kind of religious education be given to all the children in our midst. This religious, catechetical formation is essential for any baptised person who wants to witness to the faith today.

### LET US CONTINUE BUILDING!

It is not always easy to build! Young couples know from experience the cost involved in building a house, how everything must be planned down to the last detail, even as they trust in God. It was the same with our ancestors who built churches way above what we could imagine today. Most of our churches were not built during periods of economic growth. Quite the opposite! Just ask those who were involved lately in the building of a church how much prowess was needed to collect dimes and quarters and "silent collections," bingos, church picnics, parish auctions and lotteries of every kind, to raise money for the endeavour... When we think that our cathedral was built during an economic recession at the beginning of World War I, we wonder what lay beneath the courage to undertake such a project, if not an unshakeable faith. As inheritors of this faith, we must continue building our beloved Church, not only with stones and mortar, but with convictions of solid faith and charity. We must build up the People of God that is the best equipped to proclaim the wonders of our God to the world. A volunteer told me: "It is my faith that makes me canvass the people on my street." And another one who said: "I have two young children, and I want them to get a religious education, some day."

### WHAT HOPE!

The Diocesan Financial Campaign is not finished yet, but I can even now draw an unforgettable lesson in hope, from these moments of great generosity. The marshalling of the diocese is an indication to me that we can hope for a wonderful future, for our Church. I heartily subscribe to these words of Saint Paul: "Neither he who plants nor he who waters is of any special account, only God, who gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters work to the same end. Each will receive his wages in proportion to his toil. We are God's co-workers, while you are his cultivation, his building." (1 Cor. 3:7-9) For the most part challenging recommendations were made by the Diocesan Synod (1987-1990) on the subject of religious education, family ministry, youth ministry, and pastoral formation; the Diocesan Campaign will also promote the implementing of these recommendations. We had to find the resources required for restructuring our parishes, and we shall

be able to develop the appropriate pastoral programmes for years to come, thanks to God and to our generous benefactors. These gifts, like seed planted in the soil of God's garden, bolster our hope!

### **NOT FINISHED YET!**

More than fifteen parishes have now reached their campaign goal: from this point on, 75% of all money donated in these parishes will remain there. This means, for example, that St-Jean-Baptiste Parish which has reached 286% of its goal will keep more than two-thirds of what it has collected. I think that the watchword of most campaign teams is to exceed their stated goals so that 75% of all the money over their goal will remain in their communities. However, we are still short of five hundred thousand dollars of our final goal. I therefore urge you all to respond to my appeal, so that in the few days remaining we be able to reach our global objective, and that the special collection in each of our thirty-two parishes do the same. If you want to participate in the Campaign, do not hesitate to contact your parish campaign committee chairperson. If you do not have the person's name and/or phone number, just contact campaign headquarters at 506-739-9003, or you may also bring your gift directly to the Diocesan Centre. I recommend that you sign a five-year donation pledge.

### **PRAYERS AND GRATITUDE**

Each week I celebrate Mass for all the people of the Diocese, but especially for all the Financial Campaign volunteers. May the Lord give you one hundredfold in blessings for all you are doing for the Gospel cause, and for the cause of Jesus and his Church. Let us continue building our beloved Church! Let us sow love! Let us sow life! The future is ours today!

*+ François Thibodeau*

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