
A TRIBUTE TO MR. JEAN PEDNEAULT



On May 18 of this year, Mr. Jean Pedneault, editorial writer for *Le Madawaska* newspaper, received the Communication and Society award for his immense contribution to the information media. The diocesan personnel, and members of the local press, radio and television, were present to mark the event. I would like to share with you, here, excerpts from the tribute I addressed to him, on the occasion.

DIVERSITY OF TASKS

A community that works at constructing the Kingdom needs different kinds of workers in order to accomplish the different tasks required. This diversity of ministry is an unparalleled richness, and it is difficult for me to list their number and all their qualities. The famous comparison to the human body is always there to help us understand the importance of every person in building up the Body of Christ.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF JOURNALISTS

I rejoice that the World Day of Communications which usually takes place on the feast of the Ascension gives us the opportunity to take note of the wonderful contribution of all those working in the communications media in our milieu. On behalf of the Edmundston diocesan Church, I thank you and congratulate you, dear friends of the written and spoken media. Through your persistent and demanding work, you reflect our milieu's vitality. A living community needs adequate tools for transmitting news, for recording events both great and small, to enrich ourselves from the knowledge and experience of all, and to develop, so to speak, a family album. These are some of the facets of the role you strive to play, humbly and persistently.

HARD WORKER

I rejoice at the initiative of the Communications and Society Organisation on behalf of Mr. Jean Pedneault. The diocese of Edmundston joins in the tribute made to him. Jean has done so much for our diocesan Church that it would be hard to mention everything, today. If Development and Peace was able to calculate that Jean wrote over 200 articles on international aid, in the last few years, imagine that of the forty-somewhat articles he writes every week, a good portion of them deal with parish and diocesan activities. A community as big as a diocese needs special communications tools, to draw the community together. Jean succeeded in this, as he presented diocesan events and activities from all angles to an interested public. People like to learn about what concerns them, to read their leaders' messages so as to be on the same wave length. Jean has never been afraid to publish the happy and sad news of our milieus, to reproduce or comment on the pastoral discourse which is so useful and indispensable to our daily reality.

BASIC VALUES

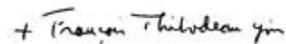
In one of his writings, Jean states that being a blue collar information worker is never easy. He tries to listen, to understand, and to accept people as they are, without judging and labelling them. Among his basic values, it is surely love of God and neighbour, concern for justice and the voiceless of society, concern for the poor and for society's rejects, that form the basic foundation of his work. Being a peacemaker, spreading joy and fellowship, taking time to laugh, to pray, and to often say thank you, these are guideposts in his daily living. And he adds: "Thinking of death is not sad: it marks the beginning of a new life!" Jean makes it his duty to write about the projects that follow one another at sometimes breathtaking speed, through the weeks and years. Throughout his writings, in the many editorials – over one thousand editorials! – he has written, we can feel the deep values which have always inspired him. The big community needs a family album where familiar faces are seen and new ones are added, for the enjoyment of posterity. The many photographs found in every issue of *Le Madawaska* and *La République* are excellent in giving a face to people and actions reported.

PRIMACY OF LOVE

I conclude this tribute with words of the late Pope John Paul II, taken from the book on the Jubilee Year 2000, a gift I received from Jean. A quotation from John Paul II at the jubilee of journalists, June 4, 2000. In the wake of repentance, charity has certainly pride of place. On March 12, 2000, John Paul II had dedicated a day to repentance. During a celebration held in Saint Peter's Basilica, the pope begged forgiveness seven times and kissed the crucifix, in order to purify memory and take the most appropriate resolutions: "Never contradict charity, in service to the truth. Never again do anything against the communion of the Church. Nevermore offend a nation, whatever it be. Never again discriminate, exclude, oppress, or despise one's neighbour or the marginalised.

Just as we cannot write and pass on ideas by using as sole criterion the number of listeners, without taking into account its pedagogical content, in the same way we cannot divulge information indiscriminately, when this information goes counter to a person's rights. No freedom, not even freedom of expression, is absolute. It ends where the duty to respect the dignity and legitimate freedom of the other begins. No situation, no action, however passionate it may be, can be communicated in writing or transmitted through the media, to the detriment of the truth. In saying this, I am thinking not only about the factual truth you report, but also about human truth, the truth of the human person in all its dimensions."

I congratulate Mr. Pedneault, and on behalf the Edmundston diocesan Church, I assure him of our gratitude and prayer.



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

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