



## From A Bishop's Journal (648)

### Joys and Sorrows in the Beloved Diocesan Church (4)

I was in Rome from May 15 to June 1, this year, for my *ad Limina* visit: a pilgrimage to the tombs of Saints Peter and Paul, to personally meet with the Holy Father, to share and discuss with the heads of the different Roman Congregation – the doctrine of the faith, liturgy, the bishops, the clergy, justice and peace, etc. – and to join in celebrations in the four major basilicas. You can be certain that I prayed for all of you. In return, I always count on your fervent prayers for me, to faithfully and courageously pursue my mission.

#### 10. Parish Pastoral Teams

A tenth source of joy to me has certainly been the formation of parish pastoral teams comprised of priests, sisters, pastoral agents, and others involved in pastoral work. It was quite a challenge in 1999 to organise such groups on whom the pastoral charge of our parishes rests. The work required of these teams is demanding, but it is a source of hope and co-responsibility.

#### 11. Committed Laity

Another source of joy is the increase in the ever greater number and the quality of committed lay people, in our milieu. We find these lay volunteers in every area of human activity, in parish choirs and humanitarian services, and in policing and ensuring the security of different events. They are also involved in support roles for future married couples, and in a number of other organisations. There will never be enough said about the need there is for such lay people.

#### 12. Youth Ministry Teams

A twelfth source of joy has been the recent development of youth ministry. This, too, is a source of hope. "Multidimensional" youth ministry can energise our entire ecclesial life. The World Youth Days are an incentive for us to continue to open our ranks to youth, in our Church.

#### 13. Atmosphere of Communion

A thirteenth source of joy – if you are not superstitious about the number thirteen! – one that touches other already-mentioned dimensions, is the atmosphere of communion we find throughout the

diocese. The rich heritage of the First Nation, anglophone, and francophone cultures, far from opposing one another, continue to be an element of solidarity and of mutual enrichment.

#### **14. The Heritage of Our Elders**

A fourteenth source of joy is the heritage we have proudly received from our elders: Golden Age clubs, the “Université du troisième âge,” and the publication of many memoirs by our elders constitute an exceptional family treasure.

#### **15. The Quality of Our Institutions**

A final source of joy is the quality of our institutions, schools, hospitals, social and even economic institutions. We can be proud of the fact that religious brothers and sisters, priests, and fully committed lay people were at the root of such institutions as nursing homes, schools, a university, hospitals, and financial institutions like the Caisse Populaire. These are signs of flourishing community health.

#### **An Enumeration to be Continued**

I could go on listing my personal and our ecclesial joys. I am firmly convinced that all Christians – and first and foremost, the bishop – must bear witness to the joy brought to the world by Christ himself. Wasn’t the first message of the angel, at the birth of Christ, “I bring you tidings of great joy to be shared by the whole people”? Such a great message! It is therefore no surprise that Jesus invites us to live the beatitudes, that is, to live in happiness.

These are the main reflections I shared, during my visit to Rome.

#### **Hymn of Thanksgiving**

“Praise to you, O Christ, for those you invite to be the mouth of your Body and who proclaim your Name to the ends of the earth.

– Praise to you, O Christ, for all those you call upon to be the hands of your Body and who work at creating a world of justice and peace.

– Praise to you, O Christ, for all those you call on to be the eyes of your Body, and who look with kindness on every person encountered.

– Praise to you, O Christ, for all those you invite to be the ears of your Body and who hear the cries of the poor and the despised.

– Praise to you, O Christ, for all those you call on to be the servants of the unity of your Body, all those in charge of communities who help their members discover and carry out their own vocation.

– Praise to you, O Christ, for those witnesses who make visible your new sacramental Presence; for the dispensators of your paschal Life and who, at each Eucharist, nourish and enrich all the members of your Body, and who gather together earth and heaven, the temporary and the eternal, the living and the dead, the suffering of the world and the joy of your Kingdom, the present, the past and the future of every human being.”

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