



From A Bishop's Journal (694)

Focus on the Eucharist at Edmundston

As we near the date of the Québec International Eucharistic Congress being held June 15 to 22, 2008, there will be a wonderful week in Edmundston, prior to this great event: the priests' annual retreat, a visit from Cardinal Marc Ouellet, Archbishop of Québec, hours of adoration, the celebration of priestly anniversaries, and a pastoral session on the Eucharist.

Priests' Annual Retreat

I was happy to invite all the priests and future priests of the dioceses of Edmundston, Bathurst, and Moncton to attend our annual priests' retreat at the Diocesan Centre, from April 30 to May 4, 2007. The retreat theme is *The Eucharist and Ministries*, and it will be facilitated by Father Jean-Yves Garneau, S.S.S., director of the pastoral journal *Prêtre et Pasteur* ('*Priest and Shepherd*'). Two years ago Bishop Valéry Vienneau invited the priests of the Edmundston Diocese to attend the Bathurst clergy retreat conducted by Archbishop Emeritus of Québec Maurice Couture, S.V., on the subject of priestly spirituality. The retreat was an exercise in fellowship, thanksgiving, and renewal. In return I extended an invitation to the Bathurst clergy to join us in our annual retreat, and I extend the invitation to the Moncton clergy. I invite you all to pray daily for all these priests and future priests who want to serve you as Jesus did. The annual retreat is really a special time of spiritual renewal, prayer, meditation and reflection, and priestly solidarity. Let us really carry in our hearts this gathering of the clergy, which is a period of grace for them, for us, and for the whole Church.

Cardinal Marc Ouellet's Visit

It does not happen very often for our diocese to welcome a cardinal. Looking back on our history, Cardinal Jean-Marie Rodrigue Villeneuve, O.M.I., came to Edmundston to bless the Immaculate Conception church on July 1, 1941, and Cardinal Paul-Émile Léger attended the *Semaines sociales* that were held here at the Université Saint-Louis, in 1953... Cardinal Maurice Roy had planned on coming to Bishop Fernand Lacroix's episcopal ordination, October 20, 1970, but the tragic death of the Québec government minister Pierre Laporte at the time of the War Measures Act, prevented his attending. And Cardinal Louis-Albert Vachon of Québec had planned on attending my own episcopal ordination, January 9, 1994, but he was held back by a winter snow storm of historical proportions. Unless there be unforeseen major events, Cardinal Marc Ouellet of Québec, Primate of Canada, will be with us on Thursday, May 3, 2007. He will meet with the priest retreatants in the afternoon, and share the meal with them. He will preside the Diocesan Eucharistic Celebration at 7:30 P.M. at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral in Edmundston. You are all most cordially invited to attend. I expect that all the parishes will be represented by many people, to thank the Lord for "The Eucharist, the gift of God for the life of the world." It is on this theme that the Québec

International Eucharistic Congress will be held, in 2008. Following the celebration, there will be time to greet the Cardinal in the Cathedral's St. Peter Chapel.

Hours of Adoration

This year we return to the tradition that was established in 1994: the bishop's chapel which is located at 60, Bouchard Street, will be open to the public May 1, 2, and 3, from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., to those who would like to visit the Blessed Sacrament to offer prayer for the priests on retreat and for the whole Church. In his Exhortation on the Eucharist, *Sacrament of Love*, published May 13, 2006, Pope Benedict XVI wrote: "The personal relationship which the individual believer establishes with Jesus present in the Eucharist constantly points beyond itself to the whole communion of the Church and nourishes a fuller sense of membership in the Body of Christ. For this reason, besides encouraging individual believers to make time for personal prayer before the Sacrament of the Altar, I feel obliged to urge parishes and other church groups to set aside times for collective adoration." I therefore invite you, as much as possible to spend some time in our chapel where nearly every day I celebrate Mass for your intentions.

Priesthood Anniversaries

Every day we are invited to give thanks for the beautiful gift of the priesthood; however, on May 4 we shall note in a special way those priests who are having an ordination anniversary. At a Mass presided by Bishop Valéry Vienneau of Bathurst who this year is celebrating twenty-five years as a priest, we shall celebrate the following anniversaries: 60 years of ordinations: Fathers Donat Robichaud and Stanislas Dionne of Bathurst; 50 years of ordination of Fathers Wilfred Benoît, Edmond Richard, Elphège Chiasson, Lionel Comeau, Gerald Boudreau, Zoël Saulnier, and Charles-Edouard Albert, C.J.M., of Bathurst, Father Yvon Cormier of Moncton, and Father Lucien Lévesque of Edmundston; 40 years of ordination of Father Jean-Paul Chiasson, I.V.D., of Bathurst; 25 years of ordination of Fathers William Arsenault and Edmond Thériault of Bathurst, Father Edmour Babineau of Moncton, Father Stanislas Paulin of Saint John, and Father Pierre Thibodeau of Edmundston. My most fraternal congratulations to them all!

Pastoral Session

A pastoral session will be held at the Diocesan Centre on Saturday, May 5, from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., on *The Eucharist, a Gift of God to Discover Anew*. Are invited all those who would like to deepen their knowledge of this great mystery of our faith. The session [in French] will be under the direction of Father Jean-Yves Garneau. The session is free, but registration must be made before May 1 by calling the Diocesan Centre at 735-5578. The object of the session is to help us discover anew the importance and beauty of the Eucharist, through the rites of the Church. The session has four sections: 1) The Eucharist, a Kingdom of Rites and Symbols; 2) The Eucharist Begins: The Opening Rite; 3) The Eucharist Unfolds: The Liturgy of the Word; 4) The Eucharist Reaches Its Summit: The Rites of the Bread and the Wine. We want this session to be accessible to everyone, and all are welcome.

Wishes

I invite you to live this week in thanksgiving and communion. May these moments of prayer and reflection help us build ever more vibrant communities.

+ François Thibodeau *gm*

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

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