



## **From A Bishop's Journal (700)**

### **Pastoral Appointments in the Diocese of Edmundston**

**L**ike last year I shall proceed in steps with the 2007-2008 pastoral appointments. First the appointment of moderators and diocesan directors and then, towards the end of the summer when the pastoral teams have been completed, appointments to the twelve pastoral units comprised of our 32 parishes. New appointments cannot be announced without first giving thanks for the Church of Edmundston which is ours. For more than sixty years, now, our young Church has been an object of God's special love, we have been blessed with countless divine benefits, and we continue to be looked upon with favour by the arrival of new pastoral ministers.

#### **A Lot of Change!**

If in 1945 there were 40,406 Catholics in the diocese of Edmundston, and 1778 baptisms; if in 1961 there were 53,960 Catholics and 1744 baptisms, we must realise, today, that as of December 31, 2006 the Catholic population in the diocese was 48,695, with 494 baptisms, 393 confirmations, 101 weddings, and 529 funerals. There are only 31 priests residing in the territory of the diocese, and their average age is 67.4 years. As of May 2007, 17 of them are in parish ministry, three are chaplains, and seven others are involved in diocesan or occasional ministry. The priests as a whole have given more than 100% of themselves. This is why it is my duty and that of everyone in the diocese to carefully review what we expect from them. This we need to do not only for the sake of their health but so that they have first and foremost the time to dedicate themselves to prayer and evangelisation. This is one of the reasons that has led me to authorise in each parish the appointment of a competent person to be the priest-moderator's delegate on parish economic affairs committees. According to possibilities and need, parishes may appoint these delegates for personnel and property maintenance.

#### **Gratitude**

As we reach the end of our pastoral year I want to express my deepest gratitude to all those who devoted themselves unstintingly to our Church, whether at the diocesan or the parish level. Thank you to our Bishop Emeritus Gérard Dionne for all the ministry he did again this year, and to Father Roger Dionne, my vicar general, for his work during my medical leave. I thank all the priests, pastoral agents, parish pastoral ministry teams, and diocesan and parish councils, the many volunteers who unfailingly contributed to building up and energising our Church. I thank in a special way those priests who have contributed in a special way as supply priests and pastoral ministry, especially Monsignor Eymard Desjardins, P.D., Father Gaëtan Bernier, Father Georges Fournier, Father Jacques Gauvreau, Father Aurèle Godbout, C.J.M., Father Leo Grégoire, I.V.D., Father Lucien Lévesque, Father Alfred Ouellet, and Father Bertrand Ouellet. I hope that according to their possibilities, they shall be able to pursue this important ministry. I thank in a very special way Father

Normand Godbout and Father Rino Thériault, who have reached retirement age and are now stepping down while remaining available for occasional ministry. I also thank Sister Jacqueline Poirier, F.M.A., for her 11 years as director of the École de la Foi; she remains available for adult baptism preparation and reflection groups. I thank Mrs. Jeannelle Morin who has worked many years in the diocesan services at the marriage tribunal and the diocesan accounting office. I thank Fathers Bertrand Ouellet, Jacques Gauvreau, and Roch Létourneau, S.M., for collaborating with Father Laurent Nadeau, in the hospital ministry in Edmundston. My gratitude and prayer go to all the confreres who, through their ministry of suffering, contribute to building up our Church.

### **Diocesan Services**

After prayer and consultation, I appoint Sister Ronilla Sirois, R.H.S.J. to a three-year mandate as chancellor and marriage tribunal coordinator, Father Bertrand Ouellet diocesan chaplain to the [French] Faith and Light Movement, and Father Ghislain Rémillard as diocesan chaplain of the Knights of Columbus, Mrs. Jeannette Pelletier director of the Diocesan Centre and its personnel, and coordinator of the diocesan office of missions. I appoint for one year Mrs. Patricia Cyr as coordinator of the Adult Faith Education programme, and Mrs. Nicole Michaud, as diocesan accounting secretary. I have responded to his request by appointing Father Claude Clavet to a one-year term as supply priest for the Upper Madawaska Zone, and I grant permission to Father Jean-Marie Martin to take a year's sabbatical leave.

### **Moderators**

Following the recommendations of the Pastoral Orientation Congress of March, 2006 and the diocesan councils, I appoint Father Ivan Thériault, to a three-year term as moderator of the pastoral unit comprising the parishes of Saint-François-d'Assise of Clair, Saint-François-de-Madawaska, and Notre-Dame-du-Rosaire of Connors; Father Whalen Bossé, I.V.D., moderator of the pastoral unit comprising the parishes of St-Thomas-d'Aquin of Lac-Baker, St-Cœur-de-Marie of Baker-Brook, and Saint-Hilaire; Father Roger Dionne, V.G., moderator of the pastoral unit comprising the parishes of the Immaculate Conception and Notre-Dame-des-Sept-Douleurs of Edmundston, with Fathers Ghislain Rémillard, collaborator, and Rino Thériault, supply priest; Father Claude Côté, C.J.M., moderator of the pastoral unit comprising the parishes of Saint-Jacques and Saint-Joseph; Father Jacques Thériault, moderator of Saint-Basile parish; Father Joseph Numbi Phaku Mavambu, F.D., moderator of the pastoral unit comprising the parishes of Sacré-Cœur of Green River, and Sainte-Anne-de-Madawaska; Father Roland Poitras, I.V.D., moderator of the pastoral unit comprising the parishes of St. Leonard, St-Léonard-Parent, and Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes; Father William Rice, moderator of the pastoral unit comprising the Assumption and St. Georges parishes in Grand Falls, Saint-André, and Saint-Michel Parish, Drummond, with Fathers Frédéric Poitras and Pierre Thibodeau as assistants; Father Ernest Dumaresq, C.J.M., moderator of the pastoral unit comprised of the parishes of Notre-Dame-des-Prodiges, Kedgwick, and Saint-Jean-Baptiste; Father Guy Loisel, C.J.M., moderator of the pastoral unit comprised of the parishes of Saint-Sacrement of Saint-Quentin and Notre-Dame-de-la-Paix of Saint-Martin; Father Curtis Sappier, moderator of the pastoral unit comprised of the parishes of Saint Theresa at Anderson Road, Assumption of Blue Bell, St. Thomas Aquinas of Plaster Rock, and St. Joseph, Tilley; and Father Leo Grégoire, I.V.D., moderator of the pastoral unit comprised of the parishes of Our Lady of Mercy, Aroostook, Saint Patrick, Limestone Siding, Saint Ann, Maliseet, and Saint Mary of the Angels, Perth-Andover. In this he will be assisted by Deacon Gilbert Doddatto, I.V.D., and Seminarian Andrew Mayer, I.V.D. May the Virgin Mary

and her divine Son bless all these people and those confided to their care. “Pray for your priests. Ask the Lord to bless them with the fullness of his love, to help them be faithful ministers of Christ the High Priest, so that they will be able to lead you to him, the fountain of your salvation.” (Chrism Mass)

+ François Thibodeau *in*

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

06-06-07