



From A Bishop's Journal (716)

“Come and See”

At the beginning of John's Gospel we read that two brothers, Andrew and John, were with John the Baptist when Jesus passed by them. The Baptist exclaimed: “This is the lamb of God!” and Andrew and John immediately followed behind Jesus who turned to them to ask them what they wanted. They answered: “Where do you live?” Jesus answered: “Come and see.”

“Come to Acadia”

We very often sing, to those who would like to know our region better: “Come to Acadia, come and visit the region, the enchanting country, I tell you, the one I sing to you and shout to you, the one I show you.” A real visit to the beautiful land of Acadia introduces us to very sympathetic and welcoming people, it allows us to learn about their history, their projects, their dreams, their difficulties, and their successes, much better than a simple radio or television documentary, or even the reading of a book about Acadia. Direct contact can reveal to us things that we had never suspected before. To be convinced of this we only need to visit the Acadian Village in Caraquet.

“Come to Québec”

I had the privilege of living nearly forty years in Québec City: however I try to describe it for you, it would always be incomplete, and only direct contact with the places I lived in, a chance meeting with those I knew, and shared activities are worth even more than any tourist guide.

“Come to Petit Cap”

For some months now the people of the vocation office have been planning a visit to the Québec Major Seminary where two of our young candidates, Jean-François Pelletier and Ianick Ouellette reside as they do their theology at Laval University. François de Laval House will be welcoming some thirty people – four adults and twenty-six youth aged 12 to 17 – on Saturday and Sunday, October 13 and 14. The bus will be leaving the Diocesan Centre on Saturday, October 13, at 7:00 A.M. On their way to Cap-Tourmente where François de Laval House is situated and where the group will be housed, there will be a stopover at the shrine of Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré and a visit to the National Wildlife Reserve: mid-October is the ideal time for observing the Canada geese. Petit

Cap is a beautiful and unforgettable spot. If time allows, a hike through Cap-Tourmente would be great. On Sunday morning the group will have the chance to go to Old Québec visit the cathedral of Notre-Dame-de-Québec and attend Sunday Mass. Then they shall visit the Major Seminary, where they will have lunch. At three o'clock, Québec time, all will be on the return trip to Edmundston. If you are interested in this trip, simply contact Sylvio Belliveau at the Diocesan Centre: 735-5578. First come, first served, to fill the thirty places. The trip cost is only \$30.00 per person, thanks to the generosity of others.

Many Questions

There are dates that we cannot forget, like a graduation, a wedding engagement, or a wedding. For me, September 7 marked fifty years of my entering the Eudist Major Seminary at Charlesbourg near Québec. I had been there several times before for hockey games that pitted the seminarians against the priests! However, I had never spent a whole day there, a place that seemed a little strange to me! "The world has changed, it is no longer the same," so they say. I know that a visit to Petit Cap and to the Québec Major Seminary will reveal to us a world we hardly know. Jean-François and Ianick will help us get to know these historical places better. Just imagine: it was back in 1663 that Bishop Laval founded the Québec Seminary. There were probably no more than two thousand souls in Québec, at the time, and the good bishop opened a trade school close to Petit Cap.

A Vocation Call

During the trip there will certainly be talk about vocations, somewhat like Andrew and John did when they questioned Jesus. Father Jean Gagnon of the Québec Major Seminary will be with us on Sunday morning. I am sure that the sharing will interest everyone. Frankly speaking, the first vocation of all is the one Jesus gave us all, at baptism. I had the pleasure in 2003 to publish my third book, *Au jardin de Dieu reconnaissons ses appels* ["In God's Garden Let us Recognise His Calls"]. I think that it is one of the best books I have written, because it is basically a collection of writings by people who have said "yes" to the call of Jesus, to follow him as disciples, in marriage, the religious life, celibacy, and the priesthood. I believe that we are discovering more and more that Jesus invites us to follow him along new and wonderful paths.

Thousands of Vocations

Jacinthe Lafrance of the Nicolet, Québec diocese writes that at a session on the vocation call, a pastoral agent stood to talk about her hope: she was imagining that very soon, in the local papers there would be an announcement: "Thousands of Vocations in the Diocese!" Nothing less! This really sounded like a waking dream! A Fantasy! Yet, it wasn't. This is truly a reality, all around us. The word vocation has been too bandied about, in modern times. Because it has been for too long seen as a synonym of the priesthood or religious life, we were led to believe that vocations, as reality, were dying a slow death. They seemed to disappear from the life of the Church as fast as candidates for seminaries and novitiates disappeared. As Christians, we all must discern the Lord's call to us. And the elements that are characteristic of every vocation, either in health or education, in social

work or religious life, are always the same: there where we feel good about ourselves, where joy, the gift of self, reaching out, recognition, and happiness. Is it not true that we could proclaim loudly that there are really thousands of vocations in our Church? "Come and see." This is a joyful invitation.

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09-26-07