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## APPRECIATION



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During the days of prayer, mourning, and fellowship that we experienced following the death of this diocese's third shepherd, you came in great numbers to pay your last respects to this beloved Bishop. Once again I wish to thank you with all my heart for all your gestures of solidarity and sympathy, fellowship and hope.

"For all those who believe in the Lord, life is not destroyed but transformed, and when their earthly sojourn ends, they already have an eternal home in heaven."

Thank you to all members of the various parishes, as well as to all the different organisations; special thanks to the Knights of Columbus who formed the honour guard for Bishop Lacroix; thank you to the members of Foi et Lumière and Foi et Partage, who gave a tribute to their international chaplain. Thank you to all those who assured us of their presence and service, during those days of mourning. Thank you to the personnel of Le Madawaska for covering the events of Bishop Lacroix's death.

The members of the Lacroix family and the Eudist congregation were deeply touched by all these marks of affection, kindness, friendship, and appreciation. With you I mourn the passing of a brother, a friend, a father. In a different way now, Bishop Thy will continue to be among us: he arrived on Wednesday, March 2 to remain among us forever - such was his last will - and to be our intercessor before the Lord, day after day.

### VISIT TO THE WORKERS

Visits to parishes continue: after that of Notre-Dame-du-Sacré-Coeur, Green River, and Saint-Basile, it was the turn of Saint-André, Clair, Saint-François and Connors. Edmundston is truly a beautiful diocese! On Monday February 18, I and Fr. Renaud Côté had the pleasure of visiting the St. Leonard Manor and the Irving Company plant at Grande Rivière. Quality of life and quality of work really go hand in hand. My thanks to those 160 workers who are giving the best of themselves, and thank you to the company management for their warm welcome. I shall cherish as a keepsake the security helmet they gave me: I shall keep you in my thoughts and prayers. What a marvellous of technology this installation is! Mine are these words from the prayer of the Church: "God who never ceases to create the universe, You desired to associate man and woman to your task: look at the work we accomplish; may we be allowed to earn our living; may our work be useful to those confided to our care, and may it hasten the coming of your Kingdom."

### TIME OF RENEWAL

I rejoice at the periods of renewal that parish communities have undertaken during this Lenten season. I give thanks to God for the days of reflection and prayer that were directed by Fr. Nazaire Auger, C.J.M., at St.-Leonard and St.-Georges, Grand Falls, the inter-community happening that took place at the Cathedral parish, Notre-Dame-du-Sacré-Coeur and Notre-Dame-des-Sept-Douleurs parishes, directed by Eudist Fathers Armand Chouinard, Clovis Chiasson, and Louis-Antoine Lachance, and Eudist seminarian Ghislain Rémillard, and the parish mission led by Father Michel Vallée at Saint-François and Connors. These are exceptional moments for growing together in faith, hope, and love!

### **MARCH 17 AND 19: OUR PROTECTORS!**

While the francophones of the diocese will be paying homage on March 19 to St. Joseph, husband of Mary and protector of the Canadian Church, our Irish brothers and sisters will not forget to honour as he should be their patron St. Patrick, the great missionary of the Church. If there is no storm on March 17, I shall be going down to Aroostook to celebrate Mass there at 7:00 P.M. I make mine the Irish prayer that their road ahead be clear and that the wind continue to push them towards ever new horizons. May the sun's rays ever cover them with their warmth and the rain refresh their fields. And may God keep us in the palms of His hands, between now and our next gathering! On March 20 I shall be celebrating Mass at Saint-Joseph on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the founding of the parish. The parish numbers 1548 persons, in 432 families.

### **MEETING WITH RELIGIOUS SISTERS, BROTHERS, PRIESTS**

On March 12 I had the pleasure of meeting the religious of our diocese, at Saint Basile. The Church is fortunate to be able to count on these vital forces, in the midst of our parishes: there is one Franciscan, 8 Eudists, 2 members of the Voluntas Dei Institute, one Brother of Christian Instruction, 76 Religious Hospitalers of St. Joseph [Hotel Dieu Sisters], 13 sisters of the Daughters of Wisdom congregation, 20 members of the Filles de Marie de l'Assomption, and 17 sisters of Notre-Dame-du-Sacré-Coeur, 5 Grey Nuns of Montreal, one Sister of the Infant Jesus, 12 Marist sisters, 10 Servants of the Blessed Sacrament, and one Oblate Missionary of Mary Immaculate. May God abundantly bless these 160 who bring to the Church a witness of faith and remarkable charity. May the Synod of forthcoming Bishops in Rome, next fall, lead us to a better understanding of the vocation and mission of the consecrated life. Have a good week!

*+ François Thibodeau*

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Bishop of Edmundston

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