
SPRINGTIME OF GOD



Priest-poet Robert Lebel sings of "Easter, springtime of God, Easter, springtime of the world, Easter, springtime of the heart, Easter of Jesus Christ." This is the marvellous reality we are now living with the Risen One. Happy Easter! What beautiful celebrations were held throughout the diocese, during Holy Week. Congratulations to the celebrants and to all those whose presence enhanced the ceremonies; and special thanks to the different liturgy committees that applied all their energies to the task, as well as to the choirs that help us pray.

HOLY OILS

For myself, I experienced an outstanding Chrism Mass in Grand Falls, at Assumption Church. Along with the hours of prayer and fellowship with the priests and the pastoral agents, it was good to get together as a Church community for the blessing of the Holy Oils. How significant, those requests made by a few people in the name of the entire congregation, that I proceed with the blessing of the oils. How significant were the accolades exchanged between the priests and their bishop, in a gesture of communion and solidarity. And it was very impressive to see all the parish delegates coming up to receive the oils for their respective parishes.

LOVE AND VIOLENCE

Holy Thursday 1994 will remain an unforgettable day, not only because of the celebration that took place at the Cathedral but because of my participation in the conference on family violence. On this day when we recall the commandment of love but commemorate all the tortures inflicted to the Christ, it causes great pain to learn that one family in eight is victimised, in Canada... A stunning document: "Violence As A Heritage."

SOLIDARITY

Prayerfully and in a spirit of recollection we made the way of the cross through the streets of Edmundston, on Good Friday. A 'first' in the city, there was a wonderful participation and collaboration, on the part of the population. A way (road) of life and solidarity with our suffering brothers and sisters, with those caught in the throes of trials, sickness, poverty. There were a few hundred of us at the starting point at the Diocesan Centre, but the crowd soon grew to close to 500 in the course of the long six-kilometre walk, a four-and-one-half hour pilgrimage. My thanks to the directors of Pastorale Jeunesse, Father Michel Vallée and Mrs. Manon Ruest-Bourgoin, for having coordinated this activity. Thanks to the youth of the St.-Hilaire Correctional Centre for having made the cross which was taken in procession to the cathedral. Thank You to the Edmundston police and Agence Réact for their priceless collaboration. Thank You also to the community college, the regional hospital, Saint-Louis-Maillet University Centre, the Filles de Marie de l'Assomption Sisters, the pastoral teams of Notre-Dame-des-Sept-Douleurs, Notre-Dame-du-Sacré-Coeur, and the Cathedral parishes; to R.A.D.O.; to Sacré-Coeur School, the Villa Desjardins, Le Madawaska newspaper, the Canada Employment Centre, and the Anglican Church, for having participated in this great pilgrimage. After such a response on the part of the Edmundston population, one is certainly encouraged to think that next year another Way of Solidarity and Life will be held. From Edmundston-West to Edmundston-East? From St. Basil or St.-Jacques to Edmundston? Who knows? Maybe we should also consider going to the springs of running water on Easter Sunday, to get some Easter water!

EASTER

The Easter Vigil is the apex of liturgical life: what an impressive prayerful and hope-filled paschal vigil! My wish to the newly-baptised is for them to continue finding fervent, fraternal, and missionary Christian communities. After the period of preparation during Lent, after all the periods of community and inter-community renewal, it behooves us to experience the marvel that is Easter. Let us continue together our journey to Jesus: may the Risen One be our joy and our strength in good and difficult days alike.

APPOINTMENT

Father Bernard Cantin, coordinator of pastoral affairs for the Edmundston Diocese and episcopal vicar for the past two years, has just been appointed provincial superior of the North American Eudist Fathers and Brothers for the next three years. I congratulate him and thank him for accepting this new position. He is my successor to the position I held until my appointment as bishop of Edmundston. He will take up his new position on April 25. In the name of the entire diocese, I wish him peace, happiness, and success. Father Cantin worked very much for our Church of Edmundston, especially in the implementation of the Edmundston Synod (1987-1990) Recommendations. He was also the one who coordinated the overall activities of the great evangelisation missions held throughout the diocese. I ask that he continue to keep us in his thoughts and prayers, that he ever consider himself one of ours, and that he continue to collaborate with us in other ways. We gratefully welcome the Eudists in our midst as partners in the tasks of Evangelisation and formation of Gospel workers.

+ François Thibodeau

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

« From A Bishop's Journal » (013) (13 April 1994)