
ORDINATION OF FATHER JEFF DOUCETTE



On May 21, at Assumption Church in Grand Falls, it was a great pleasure for me to perform an ordination to the priesthood for the first time in my life, and when it is the ordination of a priest for the Church confided to one's care, there is a feeling of making a contribution to the people of God, of giving one of the most beautiful gifts that can be: that of a priest. I have no merit in this, however: to God be all glory and blessing, to the parents, formators and all who have made this event possible: gratitude and friendship.

The ordination of a priest can be likened to the coming into our world of the Lord Jesus. It is the intimate union of the divine with the human, and this marvel will continue on through the years into eternity. Just as Jesus came to carry out the will of his Father and preach the Good News, so does the priest desire to accomplish in all things the will of Jesus and proclaim salvation in the midst of our world. May Jeff always be a shepherd according to the heart of Jesus.

A MARVELLOUS GIFT : THREE MINISTRIES

If only we could better understand this gift which God has granted us by a priestly ordination, an eternity of time would not be sufficient enough to render adequate thanksgiving for such a gift to the whole of humankind. In order to illustrate the mission of the priest I would like to use this pectoral cross of mine which I was privileged to receive from the Pope himself last November. The cross's designs remind me of a bishop's three great ministries. And as the priest is the bishop's collaborator, since the priest is intimately associated to the bishop in ministry, I look at this cross and am reminded of these three functions: the priest must announce the Word of God, he must proclaim without tiring this Good News of salvation; he must pray and sanctify the people of God through his never-ending prayer and the celebration of the sacraments; and he must govern the people of God, that is, he must daily serve his flock, giving it what it needs.

Such an episcopal service, such a priestly service cannot be carried out without a deep love of Jesus. On this pectoral cross there is also the image of Saint Peter receiving from Jesus the keys of the Kingdom, and I am reminded of these words which Jesus asked him three times: "Peter, do you love me...?" Without a deep love of Jesus, it is impossible to accomplish such a ministry. One must love with all one's heart and strength and being. This love is the life-giving source of the priest's own life and ministry.

FIVE PASTORAL CONCERNS

Since through his priestly ordination Jeff has become my immediate collaborator in this Church of Edmundston, this is what I asked him and the other priests of this Church: That in the carrying out of these three ministries, they address the five pastoral concerns specified in the first pastoral letter I addressed to all in the diocese on the occasion of Pentecost. I ask them to always have a deep respect for everyone they meet throughout the diocese: each person is invaluable; I ask that they always point out the importance of the family at the heart of our society; that they remind people of the great covenant between man and woman that God sanctioned, as well as the profound respect owed to all new life. May they daily proclaim the holiness of our God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who never ceases to accomplish great things. May week in and week out they be ever attentive regarding how they celebrate the Day of the Lord, that they be instrumental in making

it a day of rest and of family and Christian community gatherings. May they always be most optimistic regarding the future of the Church, may they disclose to each Christian his or her baptismal commitment, and may they implicate themselves in seeking out and accompanying those who are called to the priestly, diaconal, or religious vocations. May they daily be sowers who sow with hope and joy.

THANKSGIVING AND PETITION

At our June 2 Day of Prayer I shall make it a point to once again thank God for the gift of a new priest, and I shall pray that He continue to send us many more holy priests. Two committees were formed at the priests' gathering, one to set in motion the process of organising a major seminary in our midst, and the other to promote the vocational pastoral ministry. The first committee is composed of Fathers Rino Albert, Jean-Guy Lachance, and Gaëtan Côté; other persons will be added to this committee. The other committee is composed of Fathers Jeff Doucette, Pierre Thibodeau, Gabriel Friolet, and Lucien Lévesque; this committee will likewise be added to in order to develop a bold and energetic vocation ministry, especially through the implementation of the *Called By Name* vocation programme. If we truly desire an abundant harvest, it is incumbent on us to sow extravagantly and generously.

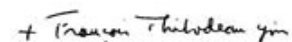
WALKING WITH JESUS

After having received such bounty from the Lord and from all of you, I want to thank you with these words sung at Father Jeff's ordination:

We want to set all people free, we want to lead them to the Father, we want to walk with Jesus.

Perhaps the way to Bethlehem, to the glory of God, to the promised peace,
Perhaps the way to Nazareth, to manual labour, to joy to the poor,
Perhaps the way to Jacob's Well, the Messiah to the people, the living water,
Perhaps the way to the Transfiguration Mount, to the radiant Son, the pitched tent,
Perhaps the way to the Upper Room, to washed feet and demanded love,
Perhaps the way to Golgotha, the raised cross and the flowing blood,
Perhaps the way to Emmaus, to hope revived and friend recognised,
Perhaps the way to Galilee, to overturned death and risen Christ.
This call is the way of Jesus.

Have a good week!



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

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