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## THE PRICELESS VALUE OF EACH PERSON

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These next few weeks I would like to share with you excerpts from my first Pastoral Letter published on the occasion of the feast of Pentecost 1994, on Human Dignity and the Holiness of God. Today I would like to focus on the unique value of those we encounter each day in our families and our milieu: this is the Lord's most precious possession in the world.

### THE PRICELESS VALUE OF EACH PERSON

On the first day of the Christian Pentecost, the marvels of God were recounted to one another. One could hear a multitude of people from Jerusalem and elsewhere proclaiming that God had made Lord and Christ the crucified Jesus, but now risen and exalted on high. The promise of a new and everlasting covenant had been accomplished, and the gift of the Holy spirit was given to all. He who is Love stamped humanity with the capacity for communion: all could identify themselves as members of the same family and work together at building up the unity of humankind. The Church was born as a sign of salvation, a sacrament of liberation; the mission was inaugurated for the sake of a universal gathering. No longer was there any distinction between Jew and Greek, slave and free person, man and woman: all were called to form one body in Christ Jesus. The time of the Spirit had arrived.

This same Spirit abides in us today; He is our strength and our life. He it is that Jesus had promised to send us, his Spirit who inhabits our being as His special abode. Thanks to this Spirit, everything is new, everything is renewed. Even our interpersonal relationships are no longer the same: we look upon the world's inhabitants as our beloved brothers and sisters, as the very members of the body of Jesus. Now that the Holy Spirit has been sent by Jesus, all human beings are intimately united to one another; there is but one Body and one Spirit, just as there is one hope, ultimately; there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism.

People of Madawaska, people of Victoria, people of the Restigouche, my brothers and sisters, you are what God the Father considers as the most precious in the entire universe. Each and everyone of you means a lot to Him, and you are priceless to Him; He does not cease to consider you His well-beloved children. In time of happiness as well as on difficult days, in sorrow as in joy, the young and the old, the rich and the poor, the sick and the healthy, in His Son Jesus God the Father considers you truly His beloved children.

A marvellous song invites us to sing out what we are, to sing it out in a hymn of gratitude or a prayer of petition: "Oh God, I am your child; I have a thousand signs of your love for me; I want to praise you with my song, the song of joy of my baptism." After the example of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who is but love and goodness for each one of us, let us look lovingly and kindly on our brothers and sisters. We have unsuspected dignity, in God's eyes. May our gaze be that of God, our heart be that of God, our word and our action be those of God. In this manner, discrimination and injustice will come to an end, wrongs and insults, and prejudice and contempt will be banished. Since the Spirit makes us live, let us let ourselves be led by the Spirit. Let us allow the Spirit to continue producing in us love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, faith, humility, and self-control. It is not a spirit of fear that we have received but a Spirit of strength and of love. Let us rival one another in love.

In the name of this same Spirit, we must continue to work for the welfare of our brothers and sisters, for the establishment of a more human milieu, better living conditions, and work that is not demeaning. We must work at eliminating all forms of poverty, injustice, and violence.

Have a good week!

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