
1994 FOIRE BRAYONNE



This was my first visit to the Foire Brayonne [Edmundston Summer Festival]. I had heard a lot of good about it and was able to see for myself. The entire city took on a festive mood, and it is through festivities that a lot of things happen: meeting one another, talking to one another, sharing, reminiscing, socialising. The cooperation, mutual help, and volunteer work were wonderful: an army of volunteers made this celebration possible, and I want to extend my most heartfelt congratulations and thanks to them. For the special Mass held July 31, a 75-member choir was organised. In the final weeks leading up to the Festival, the choir, under the direction of Mrs. Viviane Bouffard, had been preparing this celebration with great care. Thank You to all the volunteers: you achieved wonders of beauty and fellowship.

I was able to watch the impressive parade, on Sunday afternoon: it is heart warming to realise the liveliness which exists in associations, organisations, municipalities, and festivals. I was proud of the float representing the 50th anniversary of our Diocese. Thanks to all those who made this parade possible. May these days of celebration, festivity and socialising be a foretaste of bright tomorrows. May the Jubilee Year which begins December 8 be one of gratitude. Our Church is youthful and beautiful, it is the Body of Christ, the temple of the Spirit, the sign of salvation for all our brothers and sisters. Let us rejoice because the Lord, through this beloved Church of Edmundston, has come to give life, and life in abundance.

QUÉBEC ELECTIONS

Since the calling of elections in Québec, people have been asking me my opinion about politics. Here are a few thoughts. In the course of an interview I gave on the occasion of my episcopal ordination and in my final allocution, I pointed out that politics could be a privileged avenue for experiencing love and justice. And on May 2, when I welcomed the federal and provincial deputies of our diocese, I repeated the same thing, and together we looked at how those in power must be more attentive to those who are less fortunate, taking into consideration the situation of our youth, of those who rely on the social services, of the elderly, and of single women.

Whatever the election, whether municipal, school board, provincial or federal, it behooves us to carry in our prayers all who are presenting themselves for election. If the universal Church makes such a prayer on Holy Friday for those in charge of public life, while [the Church is] altogether focused on the mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus, all the more should we pray this prayer today, that the Lord guide the spirit and the heart of our politicians according to His will for peace and freedom for all: *Almighty and eternal God, you know the longings of people's hearts and you protect their rights. In your goodness, watch over those in authority so that people everywhere may enjoy religious freedom, security, and peace* (Good Friday liturgy).

In making this praying, let us ask for Québec men and women filled with generosity and a sense of justice who, along with those concerned, seek for a brighter future for the poor and those who suffer unemployment. May they have the persistence and the audacity to offer their compatriots dignified and well-paying work, a healthy living environment - especially for the elderly and the handicapped - and respect for all fundamental rights: life, health, food, education. In no way will I meddle in the Québec elections; I cannot remain indifferent to the exercise of such a democratic right. With you, I shall pray. With you, I wish to Québec peace, harmony, and prosperity. With you,

I shall respect the choices and decisions. Through all these political gestures, may a lively solidarity and a quality of human life be felt.

MEETING WITH FAMILIES, IN ROME

On the occasion of the International Year of the Family, the Holy Father has convened a world meeting of families to be held in Rome, on October 8 and 9. Each diocese was invited to send a family to this extraordinary convocation. After meeting with the episcopal council, I am pleased to announce that Paul and Julie Arsenault have been chosen and have accepted the invitation. Paul and Julie have been volunteers in charge of the diocesan [French] marriage preparation programme for twenty-five years. They will be in Rome with their two children from October 4 to 11. I wish them a fruitful pilgrimage and unforgettable meetings with the other families coming from the four corners of the earth.

WORLD ACADIAN CONGRESS

A number of people of Acadian descent from our diocese will attend the World Acadian Congress, from August 12 to 22. For my part, if nothing untoward happens, I shall take part in the solemn Mass being held in Rogersville on August 14, and I shall try to respond to the topic suggested: What will be the Diocese of Edmundston of the year 2004? Saturday, August 20, I shall preside Mass on the occasion of the Thibodeau-Broussard families gathering, in Dieppe. This historic gathering is an indication of the vitality of the Acadian people who are determined to look confidently to the future.

Happy Assumption day! Have a good week.

+ François Thibodeau

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

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