
THANK YOU!



Your generosity has shown itself in the money you have sent to alleviate the misery of the thousands of victims of the inhuman situation in Rwanda. I express my deep gratitude to all of you who have already given or who plan to give in the days to come. The money received will be forwarded to Development and Peace: we are assured that the money sent will help alleviate the well-nigh unexplainable extreme misery brought on by the endless civil war. Where there is misery, our hearts are invited to become even more generous.

CCCB, AAB, ECSC

It isn't always easy to do away with acronyms; still, I must get acquainted with all these new organisations to which I now belong: the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Assembly of Atlantic Bishops, and the Episcopal Commission on Social Communications. Notwithstanding the importance of the topics at hand and the questions studied, I must confess that after eight days of meetings in Ottawa I was anxious to get back to Edmundston because of tiredness and because, also, of the opening of the new pastoral year in the diocese. I attended the plenary session of the CCCB for the first time, and I shall long remember the atmosphere of fellowship and solidarity among the bishops. I must note two interventions of archbishop Donat Chiasson of Moncton, who introduced the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* with enthusiasm and discernment, and who talked about the World Acadian Congress; he was warmly applauded by all. As for me, during the period when note was made of the main pastoral initiatives brought about by the Year of the Family, I stressed how I was challenged by the fact that in Canada one family in ten lives in an atmosphere of violence: this statistic calls for further research and an appropriate pastoral response.

The topics for discussion allowed us to look more deeply into episcopal responsibilities in general: sacramental ministry, social communications, ecumenism, consecrated life, social situations and commitments of churches, etc. The interventions of Archbishop Rembert Weakland, O.S.B., of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on renewal of the religious life, and that of Sister Lorraine Caza, C.N.D., on the mission of the consecrated life were most significant, along with those of the delegates of the Canadian Church to the 1994 [Rome] Synod: Bishops Maurice Couture, Jacques Berthelet, Francis J. Spence, and James H. MacDonald. Allow me here to quote from an interview I had with a journalist who asked what had motivated me to accept the episcopal office: "In a world that risks to become soul-cold, it is important to meet persons and communities who remind us of God's personal and infinite love. I hope that my words and actions, my ministry and my entire life be an ongoing proclamation of Mary's prophecy that *His Love Is from Age to Age*."

I must note here the warm reception which the CCCB had for Canada's new bishops and archbishops. During the evening get-together, besides Archbishop James Hayes's book, Bishop Gilles Ouellet presented his autobiography, *La lampe et la mesure...*

WRITINGS OF MARIA VALTORTA

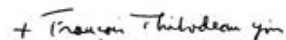
In response to numerous letters received regarding the writings of Maria Valtorta, the Pontifical Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has written the following: "Even if after the abolition of the 'Index of Forbidden Books' the prohibition from reading such writings no longer exists, one must know that the visions and accounts given cannot

be recognised as being of divine origin but must be recognised solely as literary forms employed by the author to tell in her own way the life of Jesus." All future editions of these works will have to state this clearly on the first pages of the book. (Letter of June 29, 1994)

A BASILICA?

As early as last February , in talking about the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of our diocese, I expressed the desire that cathedral-church of Edmundston be raised to the status of a basilica. Last June, Bishop Jean-Guy Hamelin, president of the CCCB, approved this project on behalf on the bishops of Canada, and in the same month I forwarded to the Congregation for divine Worship, in Rome, the three documents required and prepared by Msgr. Eymard Desjardins, on the cathedral's history, art and pastoral ministry. The eventual recognition of our cathedral as a basilica by the Holy See will witness to the quality of this church and will eventually give us a greater realisation of our communion with the universal Church. But what is more important is that the Lord has made His home in our midst and in the heart of every person, here.

Have a good week!



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

« From A Bishop's Journal » (034 (14 September 1994)