
AN URGENT APPEAL TO MEN AND WOMEN OF GOOD WILL



Through these words stressing the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Church of the Edmundston Diocese, I also want to address all persons of good will who live in Madawaska, Victoria, and Restigouche Counties. In a first pastoral letter published last May 21, I noted that each one of the 60,000 persons living in this territory were of major importance. You are special. You are the Father's well-beloved children. The Church of the Edmundston Diocese needs each and everyone of you to proclaim the Good News of Jesus, to welcome the Kingdom of God among us, and to live it out on a daily basis in our own surroundings.

The Church of the Edmundston Diocese needs you to continue building up a kingdom of justice and truth, a kingdom of life and of peace, a kingdom of tenderness, mercy, and holiness in the midst of the social, cultural, economic and political realities of our milieu. I hope that you will receive in your lives the most beautiful gift the Lord could make to humankind: the gift of himself, the gift of his Gospel, the gift of his Church.

If the Church of the Edmundston Diocese could be faulted, in situations of discord or indifference to the message of Jesus, I humbly beg God's forgiveness as well as yours, my brothers and sisters who have felt yourselves sinned against by members of our Church. And as far as I am concerned, I am ready to forgive the offenses which the Catholic Church may have been the object, as well as forget the sorrow felt in times of discord or separations; because traditionally, a jubilee or holy year is always accompanied with forgiveness and reconciliation. I hope that within families and parishes, such a reconciliation be made with generosity and goodness. May the prayer of Jesus guide our conduct: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." May those who have felt unjustly pushed aside, marginalised, accused, or even rejected by words or gestures on the part of members of the Edmundston Diocese Church, implore God's mercy and forgiveness. Let misunderstandings, suspicions, maliciousness cease, that could exist regarding unfortunate words or gestures. In the example of God the Father who lets His light shine on the just and the unjust, may our goodness and kindness, our welcome of others and our charity surpass everything that could have militated against them. "Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" [1 Corinthians 13:4-7].

The Edmundston Diocese Church needs you all to proclaim and share daily the Gospel of Jesus which we have received as an inheritance. Receive this Word of God as the Light which guides our daily steps. Within your own families, may this Word be truly a welcoming of the very person of Jesus who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The Church of Jesus manifests its life first of all by the decided actions of a local grouping of persons: wherever two or three are gathered in Jesus' name to listen to his Gospel and celebrate the Eucharist.

The Edmundston Diocese Church needs all of you to witness daily to the extraordinary hope that Jesus has deposited in us by his triumph over death, and by his resurrection. Whether it be with the sick or the dying, or with those who question the meaning of life or the after-life, Christians must bear witness to this hope before the whole world. Allow me to state once again that the Sunday gathering is one of the major vehicles of such a proclamation: every time we gather together we proclaim the return of the Lord. let me also point out that the celebration of Mass is the centre of the whole Christian life, for the local and universal Church and for all the faithful. It is in [the Eucharist] that the summit of the action through which God in Christ sanctifies the world, as well as the apex of the

worship that men and women offer to the Father, by worshipping Him through the mediation of Christ. All this points to the necessity for all baptised to gather together for fellowship, for listening to the Word, for celebrating the Eucharist, and to better serve the world. It also points to the responsibility which is ours, to make these gatherings more meaningful and nourishing. The Lord is always there, inviting us to grow together in this mystery of faith, hope, and love.

More than ever, the Edmundston Diocese Church needs each and everyone of you for fraternal and missionary renewal in the midst of daily life. Within this country, the Edmundston Diocese Church must continue to live fully the marvel of faith; it must also continue making disciples for Jesus, and allow thousands of people to live more deeply in the manner of Jesus, under the guidance of the Spirit.

LOVE WILL CONTINUE TO MANIFEST ITSELF

As baptised and confirmed children of God, filled with thanksgiving for the years gone by, proud of our ancestors, and happy to live the present moments, let us set out for the future in hope along this jubilee path. Tomorrow again the love of God will be on all our brothers and sisters. This love will spread through these acts of love that we perform each day, through the weeks and the years; it will spread through gestures of mutual help and solidarity, through words of peace and tenderness, and through daring initiatives of peace and reconciliation. If our families and associations, our work recreation places are as many places of kindness and love, the Edmundston Diocese Church will continue to be a haven of peace and of future growth. May the Virgin Mary, the Immaculate Conception, and her divine Son Jesus fill us with countless blessings! A Happy, Holy Year!

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