
BEGINNING OF THE ANNIVERSARY FESTIVITIES



United with the 50h Anniversary Organising Committee, I invite you to actively participate in the festivities that are to take place on December 8 and 11, 1994. On Thursday, December 8, feast of the Immaculate Conception, patroness of our Diocese, I invite the pastors of each parish to carry out three activities: a day of prayer - or at least an hour of prayer - the solemn ringing of the church bells at noon, and the festive celebration of Mass. As for myself, instead of having it on the first Thursday of the month (December 1) at the Diocesan Centre, I shall hold the day of prayer at the Cathedral, beginning at 8:00 A.M. with the Mass, followed by morning prayer and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament until 5:00 P.M. Confessions will be held at 11:00 A.M. As a reading for the day, I humbly suggest that you read my October 20 pastoral letter titled "O Edmundston, Beloved Church!" A second Mass will be celebrated at 5:30 at the Cathedral.

DECEMBER 11, 1994

On Sunday, December 11, at 4:00 P.M. all in the Diocese are invited to join in the solemn celebration of the Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, to mark the official opening of our festivities. I have invited every parish to officially delegate one of their families to attend: all these families, wearing a name tag identifying their parish, will be part of the entrance procession and have reserved seating inside the cathedral. I also invite each religious community to delegate three of their members to this great event. I invite the members of all the diocesan councils and committees and their members, as well as all pastoral agents to join with all the priests of our Church, in thanksgiving for these first 50 years of our Church as well as for the hope which the Lord places in us, as we look at the years to come. Filled with gratitude to the Lord, I invite you to fully experience this holy year which is at the heart of the Church of the Diocese of Edmundston. The festivities of the 50th will be marked by simplicity and will be within reach of the entire population: a major characteristic of these activities.

DIOCESAN COLLECTION

I have asked you, on the occasion of the feast of Christ the King, November 19 and 20, to collaborate financially to the various needs of our Diocesan Church. Since last January I have informed you regarding the various activities of the different diocesan services, whether regarding liturgy, social communications, catechetics, missionary activity, youth ministry, the "École de la Foi" [School of Faith, French Sector], or the Vocations Office. I have also informed you on the service given by the marriage tribunal, the service of economic affairs, the different councils and commissions. If there is so much vitality within the Diocese, we owe it in good part to the increasing number of volunteers, but we still have costs to assume regarding the diocesan permanent pastoral staff and different pastoral projects. While giving pride of place to the major pastoral orientations of the 1987-1990 Diocesan Synod, we are trying to cut down eventual deficits. A study committee is now at work, seeking for the most appropriate ways to resolve the financial difficulties encountered. For the diocesan Church to continue building day after day the Kingdom of Jesus, "a kingdom of life and truth, of grace and holiness, of justice, love, and peace," I count very much on your usual generosity.

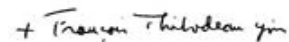
MARVELLOUS YOUTH

In the framework of the 50th anniversary festivities, an entire contingent of young people from Connors to Perth-Andover, and St. Leonard to St-Jean-Baptiste, is being organised. Dates have already been set aside for spring and summer activities, a youth rally is also in the offing, for August 12 and 13. Marc Nadeau, president of the Youth Committee, indicates five reasons for these activities: besides marking the 50th anniversary, to allow the youth of the different deaneries to get to know one another and mix and share with one another, to learn more about the geography and history of the Diocese of Edmundston, and to get to know more about each deanery. Pierre Thibeault of the Diocesan Coordinating Committee, is quite impressed with the enthusiasm of our youth. There have already been exchanges between deaneries, and this incites their elders to do as much. In this vein, the pastoral agents of the Restigouche deanery spent an unforgettable day visiting the Southern Victoria Deanery, and had a marvellous time at Plaster Rock, Perth-Andover, and Maliseet. Some twenty young people from Perth-Andover come to Edmundston to visit the Diocesan Centre, the Cathedral, and the convent of the Blessed Sacrament Sisters. On the same day, more than 150 young Americans from Maine made a special pilgrimage called "Twenty-Four Hours with God:" it was quite edifying to see them at prayer and hear them talk about their faith. As for myself, I was truly enthusiastic about the week end I passed at the Université de Moncton chapel of Notre-Dame-d'Acadie; Father Arthur Bourgeois and Sister Bernice Cormier gave me a warm welcome and allowed me to experience exceptional moments of community prayer; I was glad to meet there a number of young people from the Diocese of Edmundston: a promising future!

A HIGH POINT

I rejoice in that three parishes of the Southern Victoria Deanery - St. Patrick, Aroostook, and Tilley - had an in-depth spiritual experience as they experienced the Great Mission on Baptism with Sister Teri O'Brien of the Marist Sisters. And Assumption Parish in Grand Falls had a similar experience with Bishop Gérard Dionne. As for the Restigouche parishes, between November 19 and 27 there will be a follow-up to last year's Great Mission, with Fathers Bernard Cantin and Armand Chouinard. May these times of intense spiritual living be bearers of a renewal of commitments, may they help us better discover the Gospel, share it, and celebrate it. I also take this opportunity to congratulate the Christian communities of St. Quentin and Kedgwick for the Sunday celebrations which were filmed for Radio-Canada's "Jour du Seigneur" television programme. Congratulations to Msgr. Fernand Boucher and Fr. Gabriel Friolet, for have coordinated these activities. Thanks You also to the choirs that help us pray in a beautiful atmosphere. I can say that the Radio-Canada people were most satisfied with these productions made in our Diocese. It is with pleasure that they will be returning in August, 1995.

Have a good week!



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

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