
A MOST PROMISING HOLY YEAR



What has just taken place in each parish and, I am sure, in each family at the beginning of this jubilee year of the 50th anniversary of the founding of our diocese augurs well for the future. The prayer of thanksgiving that rose up in each parish from every family is one of the best THANK YOUs that could be addressed to the Lord for the gift of His Word, His Church, His sacraments, and His life. I want to congratulate you wholeheartedly for these prayers of gratitude and petition on behalf of the whole Church. I hope that in the days to come the prayer composed especially for the 50th anniversary of our diocese will be said often: it is both thanksgiving and petition.

ANNIVERSARY PRAYER

Our Lady, Mother of Jesus, today we acknowledge with grateful hearts your maternal protection of our diocese for the past 50 years. With you we proclaim, "The Almighty has done great things for us, holy is His name. His love is from age to age, the blessings He pours on us have no end!" Mother of the Church, turn your eyes upon each member of the Diocese of Edmundston. Bless our families and keep them united. Come to the aid of all who suffer. Through the movement of the Holy Spirit, give a new spark to the fraternal and missionary life of the whole diocese. Inspire many young people to consecrate their lives to spreading the Gospel. Our hearts are full of gratitude for the years gone by, and with pride in our ancestors in faith. Living the joy of the present moment, we move towards the future in hope. Tomorrow once more the light of God's love will shine on all our brothers and sisters. Amen.

BELOVED CHURCH

I want to thank all those who participated in the parish and diocesan activities that marked the inauguration of festivities celebrating our diocese. I am grateful to the diocesan committee that coordinated all these activities. Thank You to Bishop Gerard Dionne, to the priests, seminarians, pastoral agents, members of religious communities, to the civil, political and school authorities who honoured us with their presence, to the families that represented our 33 parishes... in other words, to all who took part in this diocesan gathering: organist and choir, readers, servers, decorators, secretaries, etc. The declaration of the opening of festivities by Mr. Jean Pilote, President of the Organizing Committee, marks a first stage calling forth another, whether this second stage be at the level of parishes, deaneries, or different organisations and movements: a rather well-filled calendar of events was recently made. My deep gratitude goes to the artists who prepared the new version of our theme song in both French and English; may these words and their melody express our gratitude for those who built our Church, may they express our pride in experiencing together these days of festivity and to proclaim very clearly our hope in the future. A special Thank You to the Daughters of Isabella who served as hostesses at the lunch following the celebration.

"LA MARÉVIÉ"

A special Thank You also to the Knights of Columbus who welcomed us to the Cathedral and who also devised the wonderful "La Marévié" mascot. As you know, the diocesan coat of arms bears a ship, the symbol of New Brunswick, which also evokes the barque of Peter, the Church we form, the People of God which

we constitute and which must go forth into the deep with audacity and courage. At anchor by the cathedral in the winter ice and snow, will sail again with the first coming of spring, to remind our people of the holy year we are celebrating with pride and gratitude. Our ship's name is composed of the first letters of the three counties that make up the diocese - MAdawaska, REstigouche, VICTORIA - and the E which calls to mind the episcopal see of Edmundston. May the MareviE sail along all our waters and instill in everyone a resolve to visit the whole of our diocese.

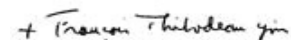
ILLUMINATION

From Plaster Rock to Connors, and from St. Leonard to St. Quentin, the flicker of lights reminds us of the happy times of Christmas and the New Year. Beautiful Christmas trees have been lighted in our towns and villages. Choirs have come, to interpret the unforgettable carols that sing of the great Love Event that took place nearly two thousand years ago. Modest candles on family tables or multiple lighting schemes that adorn public buildings, proclaim to our people "the marvel that we see;" yes, proclaim to all that the love of God is from age to age! These lights and songs are like a profession of faith in Jesus the Light of the world. In sharing with others and especially with the neediest and those who are suffering these moments of light and love, we make visible this great mystery of our faith: Jesus became man in order to make us share in his divinity.

WITH LOVE...

On the occasion of the final weeks of the International Year of the Family, I pass on to you a short meditation signed A.D.: "With love, we can change many things. We can heal the past and invite love to come in. With love, we find roses among the thorns; life can be invented over again. And your eyes fill with tears that are like God's diamonds on our waking dreams. And love hugs you so tightly and softly in the arms of love of life... It gives you a broad perspective and pulls you out of the prison of assassinated springtimes. It makes you believe the songs about living in love that were softly sung, at home, to the children... Christmas invites us to gaze upon a family of long ago, but how inspiring, still, for our times. In faith, Mary and Joseph welcome the gift of life which God offers them. Through them, God can thus fully reveal Himself to the world in the person of Jesus... The family still remains the privileged framework within which God acts at the heart of the world. It is first through the family the God continues His work of creation; it is within the family that the human person is formed in his or her cultural, social, and religious dimensions. Just as God relied on Mary and Joseph to have His Son come into the world, so does He rely on parents to lead their children to their full potential." Such is the message of the President of the Canadian Bishops for Christmas 1994.

Have a good week.



+ François Thibodeau, C.J.M.
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