
IMPORTANT EXPECTATIONS



During the consultation I made upon my arrival in the diocese of Edmundston, the first question I asked was, *What are the main expectations you have, regarding your bishop?* I received 113 answers to this question, mostly from committees and from those responsible for pastoral ministry. Very simply, I share these answers with you, so as to temporarily evaluate my first year among you.

1. THAT OUR BISHOP BE A GATHERER, A LEADER, THE FIRST PASTOR OF OUR DIOCESE:

Who promotes unity and solidarity among the clergy, who creates a diocesan and not a chauvinistic spirit, who spiritually animates the family; a spiritual leader; a saint; another Jesus;

- who is a model to his priests;
- who is honest, good, devoted;
- who promotes team life among the priests;
- who stimulates the priests' pastoral zeal and visits his priests in order to know their needs;
- who promotes priestly vocations;
- who expresses clearly what he expects of his priests;
- who plans priests' meetings, for greater open-mindedness; who is fair with all his priests;
- who brings pastors and parish leaders to set up PPCs, sacrament preparation teams, a liturgy committee, a committee for temporal affairs;
- who teaches his priests how to dialogue, to listen, and to take into account the real needs of his parishioners;
- who transfers some pastors and encourages others to retire;
- who directs and activates a pastoral priority;
- who looks upon those in charge of parishes and pastoral agents as his collaborators at the same level as the priests;
- who is concerned with the lack of vocations and the aging of his priests;
- who consults the deaneries before taking a decision regarding the clergy;
- who revives marian devotion;
- who protects and develops for his diocese the Church's teaching;
- who values the promotion of women in the Church;
- who is concerned with youth, young adults, and young couples;
- who motivates people to become implicated in the Church;
- who invites the faithful to share in the over-all pastoral objectives;
- who is concerned in stimulating in his people a taste for evangelical values;
- who is a good administrator;

- that our bishop be a Good Shepherd;
- that he lead us forward.

2. THAT OUR BISHOP BE A MAN OF GOD, A MAN OF FAITH, OF PRAYER, OF THE WORD:

- who confirms his people in the faith of Jesus;
- who makes the message enter through the gate of the heart;
- who invites the faithful to prayer;
- who supports charismatic prayer groups;
- who stimulates as vital the inter-community relations;
- who is a support for the spiritual and apostolic life;
- who helps the people grow in the faith;
- [who is] a strong man of prayer;

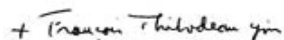
3. THAT OUR BISHOP BE A LISTENER, A MAN OF DIALOGUE AND OF EASY CONTACT, ON WHO AFFIRMS OTHERS:

- who is a good father to all, that he be a warmly welcoming person;
- who is a brother, a friend to his collaborators;
- who keeps in personal touch with each priest;
- who is attentively present to each community (priests and lay people);
- who is close to people of all ranks;
- who visits us other than just at Confirmation time;
- who visits the schools to awaken the awareness of our children;
- who is humble and tactful;
- who is available, visible, accessible;
- who defends our rights;
- who is a "missionary," that is, who takes the necessary means to meet the people on their own turf;
- who organises meetings with parishioners where there could be a forum;
- who accepts others and dialogues with them, and sees to the advancement of the diocese;
- who takes counsel;
- who is "himself:" uncomplicated, sympathetic, who can laugh and smile;
- who encourages the priests, religious, pastoral agents, and lay people to evaluate their role in the Church;
- who disseminates and explains the pontifical documents;
- who continues to inform on his activities through the use of the printed media;
- who meets once or twice a year journalists/communicators;
- who is aware of events, situations and conditions, and is available when we need someone to listen to our special needs in the English Deanery.

4. THAT OUR BISHOP BE A MAN OF DECISION:

- who is brave enough to give diocesan directives, even if these are not unanimously accepted;
- who succeeds in having everyone teach the same doctrine;
- who sets clear norms for liturgy and the sacraments of baptism and matrimony; regarding salaries;
- who makes decisions and sticks to them;
- who reaches decisions with the priests of his diocese, and who consults the lay people and religious;
- who has a vision of things, is creative, decisive, open-minded;
- who has a sound judgment;
- that he find priests for each parish;
- who does his utmost, like the bishops who preceded him;
- who enjoys good health so has to life long in our midst;
- who knows when to step aside and rest.

Be assured, dear brothers and sisters, that I will do my utmost to continue serving this beloved Church of Edmundston. It is in your midst that I want to warmly welcome and be a daily witness to the Lord's eternal love. Truly, *His Love Is from Age to Age!*



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

« From A Bishop's Journal » (050) (11 January 1995)