
A GOOD SCHOOL YEAR!



At a time when teachers and students resume their activities in the different colleges and schools of our region, I want to wish them a beautiful school year. May all the hours and days spent together be beneficial to all of you. May they contribute to your deep happiness and joy at having grown in service to others and in having learned something new.

A GOOD PASTORAL YEAR!

A new pastoral year also starts for our priests and pastoral agents. To them also I wish much joy in their service to the baptised and confirmed in our milieu. May this year be most conducive to a new evangelisation that will allow us to discover anew, better appreciate and better share and celebrate the Gospel for the great treasure it is. May this year allow us also to deepen day by day the great mystery of the Church, a veritable gift of God to humankind.

ON NOT TURNING THE PAGE TOO FAST!

Before the 1994-1995 pastoral year becomes a thing of the past we must take the time to look back at the last months we have lived together as Church. Happy are those who see what we see! Happy are those who hear what we hear! God was pleased to do great things for us, and it is right and good to give Him our heartfelt thanks. recall the ordination to the diaconate of Curtis Sappier. This was the first time in the Atlantic region - according to available information - that a Maliseet was ordained deacon. What a marvellous celebration we had, at Maliseet! Simplicity, participation, gratitude, and pride were the hallmark of this ordination. A people expressed the culture and their faith through the drum, prayer, chanting and singing. recall also our diocesan seminary: it has become a reality, it is a gift of the Lord. Modest and simple, but most promising beginnings. Five seminarians for our Church: this is encouraging news! A youthful and dynamic formation team to welcome the young and the not-so-young who wish to discern the call of the Lord for them, in service to their brothers and sisters. Then there is the setting up of our pastoral formation service, one that will help us form Gospel workers for our region.

Remember also all these moments we shared together during the activities marking the fiftieth anniversary of our diocese: celebrations in the Grand Falls Deanery on June 11 gave the people there the opportunity to express their profound faith and their solidarity, and the youth the chance to proclaim their enthusiasm and hope. Festivities in the Southern Victoria Deanery on June 25 underscored the always extraordinary work of the Holy Spirit in his Church; they were the occasion for families as a whole to express their gratitude to the pioneers in their communities. Then there were the summer activities during the seventeenth *Foire Brayonne*: the gathering of bishops, priests, religious, the gathering of golden anniversary couples and of those baptised or confirmed in 1944-1945. Remember the Lord's Day celebration, marked with thanksgiving: an entire people expressing its faith in a spirit of recollection and in joy. There also was the Youth Rally: marvellous things happened not only during these 24 hours but throughout the months of preparation: unforgettable contacts, bonds of solidarity, an overview of our diocesan Church. And the list of events could stretch on for a long time. If one must not dwell on the past, one must nonetheless deeply experience each of these activities which are truly moments of exceptional grace.

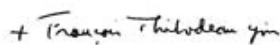
A GOOD MISSION!

One of the major events of our Church, these last few weeks, has been the generous acceptance of a new mission by several of our priests. Parishes have rightfully expressed in a spirit of faith and generosity their gratitude to their pastor who was leaving them for a new mission. These separations are not always easy. In these appointments, there is no question of promotion or demotion. For me, every parish is important; no two are alike. The main criterion marking the appointments - taking into consideration the lack of priests - has been to give the pastor who can respond to the spiritual needs of the population in question. All baptised and confirmed are responsible with me for proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus. All ordained pastors are responsible with me for the spiritual and sacramental life of the Church of Jesus that is being built in our milieu. We share this responsibility together in the name of Jesus. I want to congratulate you and thank you for the spirit of faith and solidarity exhibited throughout these changes. I know of few missions and few vocations that are easy or cheap. As for me, the call made to me by Pope John Paul II in the name of the Church in October, 1993 radically transformed not only my immediate projects but my life as a whole. What is important is to wholehearted and generously carry out the will of the Lord that is made know to us through all these people and events.

A PROMISING YEAR

On August 21 and 22 the diocesan pastoral team had two days of sharing and planning. They first were introduced to the socio-economic reality of our milieu, by learning about the most needy in our midst. A heartfelt Thank You to the R.A.D.O.¹ directors for their warm welcome and information regarding services offered to hundreds of people who daily frequent this now-indispensable establishment in our region. Mr. Jacques Martin and Mr. Paul Arsenault gave us a socio-economic picture of the province of New Brunswick but especially of the northwest: number of social service and unemployment insurance recipients and money expended, conditions for eligibility, job availability, average revenue, schooling, etc. A picture to be completed in days to come by meeting with those concerned. This preoccupation for the needy is a Gospel constant. With the help of three resource persons C Mr. Jacques Albert, Mrs. Lise Thériault, and Ms. Lucille Gagné, reflection was pursued on how the Edmundston Diocese Church is perceived. Each individual must be considered as a full-fledged member of the diocesan Church, hence the importance of a real and continuous welcome, the need for the constant vitality of all its members, and the daily concern for being considerate to every person forming the Christian community. The diocesan team is made up of Sister Claudette Ruest, coordinator, Mrs. Jeannette Pelletier and Mrs. Georgette Thibodeau of the Mission Office, Mrs. Manon Ruest-Bourgoin of the Youth Ministry Office, Sister Geraldine Brotherton of the Centre for Spirituality and the Pastoral Formation Service, Father Michel Bouffard of the Diocesan Seminary, Father Jeff Doucette of the Vocation Office, Father William Rice of the Liturgical Commission, and Sister Constance Gervais of the Catechetical Office.

Have a good week!



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

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¹ Soup kitchen and shelter in Edmundston