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## THE RESTIGOUCHE CELEBRATES!



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There was celebrating in the Restigouche, September 10. The occasion was the diocese's fiftieth anniversary, and what a grandiose affair it was. The organising committee under the capable direction of Mr. Maurice Babineau of Kedgwick, had set up a very interesting and hands-on programme which grouped together the four parishes of the deanery, from which five Jubilee Couples were recognised and a community supper for over 450 persons was served.

### RICHNESS OF THE REGION

The Restigouche Deanery is remarkable from a number of vantage points: over 6,000 baptised and confirmed people residing in the parishes of St-Martin, St-Jean-Baptiste, St-Quentin, and Kedgwick. I shall have the opportunity to visit with them at greater length during Lent of 1996, at the time of my pastoral visit there. The Restigouche Deanery is enriched with all these people; it is also enriched by everything which nature has given the region in abundance, profusion, and generosity: rivers well-stocked with salmon and other fish, green forests that hold the secrets of longevity and beauty, and mountains that have not as yet yielded up all of their secrets. During the celebration, excerpts from the first book of the Bible were proclaimed, telling us how God himself had look upon and been marvelled by what He had created: God saw that everything He had made was good, even very good. Let us allow ourselves to marvel at everything there is in the Restigouche and throughout the diocese; I believe that this will be a very good way of celebrating our Fiftieth, by discovering God's gifts, unwrapping them in gratitude, looking at and being filled with gratitude for this gift of our beloved Church.

### THE FOREST, A MARVELLOUS GIFT

This deanery is rich in wood: 85 % of the province of New Brunswick is wooded but here in the Restigouche, the forest appears in all its splendour and beauty. Wood is one of life's great necessities. After the products necessary for the maintenance of human life, there is nothing which is more indispensable nor more universal in the domestic and public economy, than wood. If you forget about wood, and wood in vast amounts, it will be impossible for you to get an idea of what civilisation is. Other industrial products may well be developed at lightning speed, but new techniques, new uses, and physical and chemical transformations have maintained wood and wood products in an enviable position, in our country's economy.

In last February's forestry newsletter, we read that New Brunswick is a province which enjoys abundant forests covering a vast portion of its territory. The advantages brought on by this state of affairs are both abundant and varied: the regulation and flow of water, food and shelter for animals, and recreational activities. The forest also provides fibre for the pulp and paper industry, building material such as lumber and plywood, as well as other products like Christmas trees and maple syrup. These advantages are reflected in the jobs, the revenue, and the quality of life they create for New Brunswickers. As a matter of fact, of all industrial sectors in our province it is the forest industry which is the biggest, with 820 mills, 11,755 employees, and millions of dollars in salaries.

These figures are familiar to us, but during our celebrations it is good to point out these marvels of the forest and to repeat with the Creator Himself that this is good, and to tell those who are looking after it that that is very good.

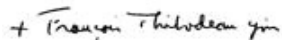
## THE CHURCH IS LIKE A FOREST

Last May, at a pastoral workshop held at the Diocesan Centre, we were asked to what we could compare the Church. Several answered that the Church resembled a vast work site, a vast construction site: each and everyone of us is responsible for the Church being erected. But one group found a slightly different comparison: The Church is like a forest. Look at the extent of a forest: it is universal; look at the Church: it is universal. The forest is composed of a variety of thickly-growing trees: the Church is composed of a multitude of races, tongues, nationalities, colours. The forest has the capacity of regenerating itself in its different species in constant evolution; the Church has a capacity for constant reproduction and evolution, it adapts to the ways of life, customs, and traditions. The forest radiates beauty. If we know how to use it to its full potential, it will serve us for years to come, but without discernment, the law of the jungle will prevail. The Church has beauty, grandeur, and nobility, it can discern those values that are life-giving, and it has the capacity to judge and reason. The forest knows constant upheavals: cataclysms, destruction by nature, by man and woman, by fire. The Church also experiences periodical major changes. The forest reveals to us an unparalleled vitality; its cycle is miraculous: seed, shoot, plant, fruit, food, and return to the earth; the Church grows little by little and becomes a pilgrim people. The forest needs man and woman, in order to survive and grow, and people have to discover their Creator as a friend, a guide, a support, a saviour.

## IT IS TRULY A BELOVED CHURCH

The Church is like the forest we contemplate, that we look after and open up to all our brothers and sisters. For fifty years the Edmundston Diocese Church has welcomed everyone from the Restigouche, Madawaska, and Victoria counties, men, women, and children, a diversity of people united in one faith, one love, and one hope. This Edmundston Diocese Church is more beautiful than a forest, it is full of the future, it reveals the mysterious presence of God, it can nourish us and be part of our dearest projects. More than ever we have cause for singing, *"You are ours, beloved Church, you tell us of peace and freedom; you will always remain a beautiful project, in our hearts, a rendez-vous of love, a beautiful project, a rendez-vous for all."*

Have a good week!



+ François Thibodeau, C.J.M.  
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« From A Bishop's Journal » (086) (20 September 1995)