
MARVEL, GRATITUDE, AND SOLIDARITY



In reviewing the events that took place throughout the diocese during Holy Week, I cannot but marvel at everything beautiful and grand that was experienced on those days. I felt a deep faith and had a great feeling of solidarity. I congratulate you warmly for that hope-filled spirit. The big turn-out at the different activities greatly rejoice me: all of this shall be very beneficial to the population as a whole.

EDMUNDSTON-MEXICO MISSION

On Palm Sunday I presided the diocese's fifth Missionary Departure. At the end of April six young persons, accompanied by Sister Claudette Ruest and Mrs. Manon Ruest-Bourgoin, will be leaving for a one-month mission visit to the most deprived people of Mexico[...] Mrs. Parise Byron took part in the preparation of our missionaries; the sharing of the Word of God marked them throughout the period of formation. May those who are going to our Mexican brothers and sisters to share their faith and hope be blessed.

"STABAT MATER"

On this same Palm Sunday I had the joy of attending the Sacred Concert put on by Drummond's St. Michel Choir, to prepare us to celebrate the paschal feast and also to financially help the parish of Drummond. What a beautiful concert it was, under the direction of Mrs. Léola Dionne! What beautiful voices, what talent! I even asked the choir to make this a tradition. Just as at Christmas we have the opportunity to prepare ourselves for that great feast with many concerts, I hope that a concert similar to the "Stabat Mater" one be held annually. It was a marvellous experience to listen to young and not-so-young help us share in the feelings of Jesus and his Mother, in the course of these precious hours.

CHRISM MASS

People came from all over the diocese to join in the blessing of the holy oils. What piety there was in the church of St-Martin! What an unforgettable celebration, in the course of which we carry in our hearts and our prayer all the baptised and those to be baptised in the future, and all the confirmed and those to be confirmed in the future, our sick brothers and sisters, and all the ordained and those to be ordained in the future. In giving the newly consecrated oil stocks to each parish representative, I was thinking of this precious treasure bearer of happiness, peace, and love. Thank You to the people of the Restigouche, and especially to those of St-Martin, for their warm welcome. The participation of the four deanery choirs was a sign of the solidarity found in the deanery. This was like a foretaste of what we can expect at our first Diocesan Eucharistic Congress, this coming June 7 to 9.

ROUTES OF THE WORLD, PATH OF CHRIST

By going through the streets of Edmundston and those of Grand Falls for the great Way of Solidarity with those who are suffering, I felt more than ever that the routes of the world are the path that Jesus chose to travel, to bring the Good News to the poor. I thank wholeheartedly those who made this very simple but meaningful

event possible. At the heart of our lives, through the days, the glorious cross of Jesus gives new meaning to all the trials we undergo, however painful they may be: denials, betrayals, desertion, rejection, sorrows, and even death. We have walked together. And as at Emmaus, Someone walked with us. We have recognised him. Were not our hearts burning, in his presence?

MSGR. GEORGE TRAVERS

It was in such a context of faith and prayer that I heard of the sudden death of Monsignor George Travers. Your solidarity, prayer, and friendship were of a great help to me. It is painful for a bishop to lose one of his priests; and it is the second one in less than two months. The theologian Teilhard de Chardin wrote, at the time of his brother's sudden death: "The Lord seems to decidedly enjoy himself in cutting down on the number of instruments he has... We must look at this as a 'blessed passivity' to use even more trust in his power that organises all." The many testimonies received attest to the fact that Msgr. Travers gave himself totally to his ministry. Bishop Edward Troy of Saint John grieved at hearing of the death of the former chaplain general of the Canadian armed forces, sent me these words: "I knew him as a friend as well as a fellow worker. I had much esteem for him. I want to offer my condolences to the Edmundston diocesan family as well as to the Travers family." May this trial which was lived in faith and hope be like the seed that will grow into numerous priestly and religious vocations. May our hope be nourished by these words of priest-poet Robert Lebel:

Easter, springtime of God,
Easter, springtime of the world
Easter, springtime of the heart,
Easter of Jesus Christ.

When on the branches the unhoped-for buds appear
When the snow geese return from their emigrant lands
We shall celebrate the revenge of the present on the past
And like on that first Sunday, the return of the First-Born.

When the ice jams will break up under the force streams
And that the cliffs of ice will give way to the water
We shall celebrate the miracle of the opening of the grave
And like on that first Sunday, the victory of the Lamb.

+ François Thibodeau ym

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

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