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## NOTRE-DAME-DU-SACRÉ-COEUR PARISH

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On May 24 I wrote a letter to the parishioners of the Notre-Dame-du-Sacré-Coeur Parish, [Parish of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, in Edmundston] I made known the decision I had made following a long consultation process regarding the future of their parish.

### LETTER TO THE PARISHIONERS

At the end of these long consultations regarding the future of your parish, I want first to express my gratitude to all those who were involved in the community: your pastor, your PPC and PEAC members, and all those who took part in the parish survey. A special Thank You to all who prayed for discernment of God's will in these delicate consultations.

It is but today, May 24, that I take the difficult decision which you have been anticipating for some time now. And this decision is made in full accord with my different councils. The enclosed Decree comprises a juridical decision compliant with Church legislation. It summarises the main events leading up to the Decree. The survey to which over 80 % of the parishioners responded in early May was an important component in the decision taken.

After taking the actual situation into account and looking at the future, I must announce that your parish will canonically cease to exist as of June 30, 1997, and that your community will henceforth become an integral part of the Cathedral Parish. I hope that once you are free of some of the pastoral and financial problems, you will pick up the challenges of the next millennium and continue to live your life of faith fully. In imitation of the first Christian communities that were faithful to the teaching of the apostles and the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer, [Cf. *Acts of the Apostles*, 2:46] the new Christian community that you will form will be a place to grow together as disciples of Jesus.

May the Blessed Trinity whose solemnity we are celebrating today continue to be honoured and worshipped through our lives, even at those times that seem to be the most difficult to overcome. Please accept my friendship and daily prayer on your behalf.

### DECREE OF TERMINATION

Greetings and Peace in the Lord!

### WHEREAS

1) since for more than ten years countless discussions were held regarding the pastoral and financial situations of Notre-Dame-du-Sacré-Coeur Parish in Edmundston;

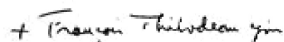
- 2) that the financial burden has become more and more difficult to bear due to the economic recession and the small number of faithful at parish Mass;
- 3) that with the retirement of the pastor in 1995 there was already talk of the closing of the parish because of the shortage of available priests;
- 4) that the setting up of the new diocesan seminary in the renovated rectory only postponed the actual situation;
- 5) that the Priests' Senate, the Diocesan Pastoral Council, the Diocesan Council for Economic Affairs, the College of Consultors, and the Bishop's Council were all consulted on February 20, 1997 regarding what should be done and what steps should be taken;
- 6) that the Parish Economic Affairs Committee, the Parish Pastoral Council, and the parish annual meeting were all consulted regarding the offer to buy by the City of Edmundston;
- 7) that a survey on the future of the parish was made in early May, 1997;
- 8) that the Diocesan Council for Economic Affairs expressed its opinion on the subject at its May 20 meeting;
- 9) that the Code of Canon Law (Canon 515, ' 2) states that *the diocesan bishop alone is competent to erect, suppress or alter parishes; he is not to erect, suppress or notably alter them without hearing the presbyteral council;*
- 10) that the Presbyteral Council [The Priests' Senate] explicitly advised me at its May 23 meeting regarding this present decree;
- 11) that the Act of Civil Incorporation of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Edmundston, Inc., [April 7, 1946] grants me the power to make the most appropriate decisions for the good of the Church of Edmundston as a whole:

THEREFORE

I, François Thibodeau, C.J.M., Bishop of Edmundston, after prayer, consulting, and reflection, and in agreement with concerned diocesan and parish authorities, decide the following:

- 1) The parish of Notre-Dame-du-Sacré-Coeur in Edmundston, founded in 1950, will cease to exist canonically as of June 30, 1997.
- 2) The actual parish of Notre-Dame-du-Sacré-Coeur will on that day revert to the Cathedral Parish of the Immaculate Conception, the position it occupied before 1950.
- 3) The diocesan seminary will be relocated at the rectory of the Cathedral Parish.

Made and signed May 24, 1977, by me, and certified with the seal of the Diocese and the signature of the Chancellor.



+ François Thibodeau  
Bishop of Edmundston

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