



## ASSIGNMENTS 1997

It is always a challenge to respond in an adequate way to the many pastoral needs of our people, since it is important to meet the needs of our practising brothers and sisters, as well as those of all others whom the Lord has confided to our care. As a matter of fact, it is to the baptised, confirmed, and ordained that the mission is given to carry on the work of Jesus. A common co-responsibility must continue along the years, as we go through the task of restructuring our pastoral ministry, in the wake of the Diocesan Synod. Even if this Synod, inaugurated ten years ago, appears to be ancient history, by now, we must still return to the intuitions and recommendations approved by this great diocesan assembly.

### 1998 SESSION ON PASTORAL MINISTRY

I want to make an early announcement regarding a very important pastoral conference to be held February 3, 4, and 5, 1998. It is at that conference that we shall be able to define certain Church standards which we are now beginning to formulate: we shall be in a position to sanction the new ministries that are emerging in our Church and to encourage collaboration between priests and lay people, and restructure a number of pastoral works. We shall have to look at what services we shall be able to maintain in each deanery: the absence of more than 80 % of our population at weekend masses raises questions regarding not only whether masses should continue there at all but even the canonical status of the parish; it could well be that a particular parish lose its canonical status and just become a place of worship. There are actually 32 parishes in the diocese, 15 of which with fewer than one thousand people. When 80 % of these people are absent, you can appreciate the necessity for changes. Our Church must become more missionary by reaching out to those who are no longer affected by our liturgies. The pastoral agent formation programme [French Sector] established in 1995 has already provided close to 40 pastoral agents and auxiliaries, and these are a fine addition to our Church. For 1998, we are already considering the creation of a catechetics formation programme to help parents who so desire, dispense religious education to their children. Introducing Jesus and his Good News to those who know him very little or not at all is a wonderful evangelisation challenge.

The assignments that follow and that are to take effect August 15 are evidence of certain changes to come, to help us take up the mission challenge of the third millennium.

### DIOCESAN SERVICES

I gratefully thank Bishop Gérard Dionne for having accepted the position of judicial vicar for our diocese. His vast experience in pastoral ministry and canon law will continue to be an asset to our church. I am pleased to announce that I renew Father Roger Dionne's mandate as vicar general for another three-year term, and I thank him for his availability. A vicar general carries on a number of tasks that are generally carried out by the diocesan bishop, especially in the latter's absence. While remaining pastor of the Immaculate Conception Cathedral, Father Dionne will also become director of the diocesan seminary: his task will be to coordinate the formation team of our future priests; members of this team will be appointed shortly.

Sister Claudette Ruest, the new provincial superior of the Marist Sisters, has accepted a second three-year term as part-time diocesan coordinator for pastoral ministry; she will continue to direct the diocese's pastoral ministry, especially through the coordination of activities in our five deaneries. She shall also coordinate the diocesan anglophone pastoral ministry office which is to be formed these next few weeks, to ensure for our anglophone sector the formation of pastoral agents and auxiliaries. I appoint Mrs. Jeannette Pelletier director of the Diocesan Centre; her main task will be to ensure the maximum use of the building, especially through monthly retreats and other pastoral activities. The services of Father Yvon Samson, Trinitarian, are available for this. I also renew for one year the mandate of Sister Constance Gervais, S.M. as director of the diocesan catechetical office, that of Mrs. Manon Ruest-Bourgoin as Youth Ministry coordinator and director of the Office of Social Communications. Mrs. Jeannette Pelletier will continue as director of the Mission Office. Mrs. Louise Morin becomes coordinator of *La vie au quotidien* radio programme; Mrs. Marie-Mae will coordinate the radio programme *Au rythme de l'Église*, and Father Yvon Samson the television programme *Vivre en plein soleil*. Within the next few weeks another vocation ministry team will be appointed, with Father Pierre Thibodeau as coordinator.

## DEANERIES

**UPPER MADAWASKA DEANERY.** I appoint Fr. Claude Côté, C.J.M. pastor of St-François-d'Assise Parish, Clair, and Sister Elmona Thibodeau, R.H.S.J., pastoral agent for the Upper Madawaska Deanery; she will also be in charge of coordination the preparations of the Third Diocesan Eucharistic Congress to be held at Clair on June 12, 13, and 14, 1998; besides this, and in cooperation with the catechetical office, she will coordinate the training of future catechists for this deanery.

**EDMUNDSTON DEANERY.** A pastoral team will serve the cathedral parish (Immaculate Conception), which is to return to the geographical limits it held prior to 1950: Father Roger Dionne, pastor, is the team coordinator; Father Gaëtan Bernier is appointed assistant pastor for a one-year term, and Ms. Patsy Morency, pastoral agent, is also appointed to a one-year term. I appoint Father Gaëtan Côté to a three-year term as pastor of Sacré-Coeur Parish at Green River, in addition to his pastoring Ste-Anne-de-Madawaska Parish; his collaborators will be appointed shortly. I appoint to a one-year term a ministry team for the A.-M. Sormany Regional High School in Edmundston: Fr. Yvon Samson, O.ss.T., as coordinator, Martin Laflamme and Mrs. Manon Ruest-Bourgoin. I renew for another three years the mandate of Father Laurent Nadeau as chaplain of the Edmundston Regional Hospital and the Madawaska Correctional Centre. I appoint to a three-year term Father Alfred Ouellet as chaplain of the Hôtel-Dieu of St. Joseph, at St. Basile.

**RESTIGOUCHE DEANERY.** Sr. Viola Côté, F.M.A., is appointed to a one-year term as person-in-charge of St-Jean-Baptiste Parish, and I renew for another year the mandate of Sr. Rita Arsenault, F.M.A., as person-in-charge of St-Martin Parish. I appoint Father Ghislain Rémillard to a one-year term as pastoral administrator of Notre-Dame-des-Prodiges Parish, Kedgwick, and I appoint the seminarian Philippe Tardif intern at Très-Saint-Sacrement Parish, St. Quentin.

**GRAND FALLS DEANERY.** I renew Sister Ovélina Roy's mandate for another year as person-in-charge of Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes Parish, and I appoint Sister Jeannette Bryar, F.M.A., to a one-year term as pastoral agent.

**SOUTHERN VICTORIA DEANERY.** I renew for one year the mandate of Father Curtis Sappier as pastoral administrator of St. Patrick Parish, Limestone Siding, and St. Joseph Parish, Tilley. I appoint Father Pierre Thibodeau to a one-year term as pastor of the Blue Bell, Plaster Rock, and Anderson Road Parishes; his collaborators shall be appointed shortly.

## **THANKS**

n behalf of the Diocese of Edmundston and in my own name I want to express my deepest gratitude to all who devoted themselves so deeply throughout the year: priests, sisters, lay people, volunteers... I also express my gratitude to those who, for whatever reason, are concluding their ministry here. Thank You to Father Michel Bouffard, S.M. who was pastor at Notre-Dame-du-Sacré-Coeur Church and director of our diocesan seminary. He shall be embarking on a sabbatical year, come September: it is my sincere hope that he hurry back again to us! Thank You to Father Alfred Ouellet who was administrator of the Green River Parish, and to Father Frédéric Poitras who served at Blue Bell and Anderson Road: thank you for your generous availability. Thank You to Father Jean-Guy Lachance, C.J.M., who is finished his teaching at St-Louis-Maillet University Campus. Thanks to Fr. Lewis Long for having collaborated in the Hôtel-Dieu-de-St-Joseph pastoral ministry. Thank You to Sister Bertille Beaulieu, R.H.S.J., for having been on the Seminary Formation Team for these past two years. Thank You also to Sisters Alberte Gallant, F.M.A., and Marie-Paule Normand, F.M.A., both of whom are being transferred to St-Irénée, and Sister Johanne Poirier, F.M.A., who will be pursuing further studies in Belgium. Thank You to Mrs. Ann Campbell for having served as the Anderson Road administrator, to Mrs. Georgine Rioux who served at BlueBell, and to Mr. Harold Short-Evans for his indefatigable work at Plaster Rock. May the Lord give a hundredfold to them for their devotion to our beloved Church.

Enjoy your summer!

+ François Thibodeau

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Bishop of Edmundston

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