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## FAITHFUL TO THE END (3)



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After having considered the fidelity of our ancestors in the faith, it behooves us to set all in motion in order to respond to the mission that was given to us at baptism and confirmation.

### THE MISSION OF EVERY BAPTISED AND CONFIRMED PERSON

In line with the faith of one's baptism, everyone is called to proclaim with one's own life, in the working place as well as in the leisure world, that one is infinitely loved by God. One's profession of faith is not found only within liturgical celebrations: one can proclaim God to the whole of creation spread before us. *Maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.* [Profession of Faith: Nicene Creed] The baptised and confirmed confess God lovingly present to every human being. They respect all persons in their dignity of children of God, they respect the environment and act as stewards of what has been handed over to their care for use by all. The baptised and confirmed proclaim the coming and presence of Jesus, true God and true Man, in the midst of our world. Along with Vatican Council II, the baptised and confirmed also recognize that the joys and hopes, the sadness and anguish of the men and women of our time are also those of Christ's disciples, and nothing that is truly human fails to find an echo in their hearts. [Cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 1] There is a community composed of men and women united in Christ, guided by the Spirit as they press onwards towards the Kingdom of the Father, and who bear the message of salvation intended for all. The Christian community cherishes a feeling of deep solidarity with the human race and its history. [Ibid.] They must always be ready to account for the hope, founded on Christ, that is theirs.

### PRESSING QUESTIONS

You who are reading this were certainly baptised, at one time. What are you doing with your baptism? What are you doing with all the talents and aptitudes you have? What services can you render in your milieu? What can you offer to the youth who are looking for positive values, to the elderly looking for a sense to their old age, to the poor begging for food and understanding, to the sick waiting for a gesture of gentleness and friendship? What have you to offer your fellow citizens in the name of your baptism, in your social and political involvement, at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels? Yes, what services can you render your neighbours? The gifts you have received that allow you to grow in life were given for the growth and development of your neighbour.

### APPEAL TO YOUTH

I am addressing myself in a very special way to our young people: Not only are you the hope of the future but today you are a richness to our world. Your vitality, your enthusiasm, your vision of the world, your dreams and projects allow us a glimpse at the future, one that is full of hope. I want to tell you with Jesus that if you share your Christian faith it is not a dead-end future that is opening to you but one that opens to the light. Your presence and your original input are essential to the building up of your communities. And I want to tell you once again that I have full confidence in you. If it has not already occurred, may you experience in an intimate way the Risen Jesus, the Living One. May you catch yourself whispering 'Let me find you in my life, let me keep my lamp lit, let me choose to be trusting, to love and to know I am loved.'

## APPEAL TO FAMILIES

At the heart of every family, at the heart of our families there is a permanent feeling of urgency, that of building an affectionate, welcoming place where each family member feels warmth and support, where each one can share with the others and grow in love and solidarity. The family has gone through deep changes, these last few years, but it still remains our vital milieu. Hence the need of ensuring that each family be given the attention it needs. In our milieu there is still room for the Christian family, where there is room for giving and forgiving, for sharing and accepting others, for helping one another and for growth, there is need for the family where there is room for education and growth in the faith, and for prayer life. This family unit is the basic unit not only of society but also of the Church. I rejoice at all the links that are created despite new challenges and major difficulties faced by families, I rejoice at the links of fellowship and goodness that bind family members throughout their lives. It is good for us to remember that our families were exceptional agents of evangelisation, in our region: the Christian faith was handed down in this way from one generation to the next. Concern was always there to present Jesus as our Saviour and friend, as the one who alone could understand, take on our pain, give meaning to our lives, and journey with us. I rejoice at this life of faith, at all the profound Gospel values that we can still find in several families. Christian parents who have been married before share with me the mission of love you were both given. By your love you witness to those around you how much the Lord loves us. This is an irreplaceable ministry that you have, and we need you. Families among us, remind us once again of the power of love and of unity in diversity.

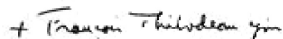
## APPEAL TO RELIGIOUS

Religious of the diocese, you are a precious aid to us. By your whole lives dedicated to the Blessed Trinity you remind us of the fraternal communion that must exist among us: We are all brothers and sisters in Christ. You also remind us of the service of love rendered by Jesus, when he was among us: We must serve one another. May the Lord continue to give our Church men and women who are free to love and serve others.

## APPEAL TO PASTORAL AGENTS

Pastoral agents, the Edmundston Diocese Church needs you in order to meet new situations that have arisen in our midst, in the areas of faith education, catechetics, sacramental preparation, training of new Christian leaders, youth ministry, and ministry to the elderly, the sick, workers, and the poor. May the Lord continue to bless His Church and each one of our Christian communities with people such as you!

Have a good week!



+ François Thibodeau

Bishop of Edmundston

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