
FAITHFUL TO THE END (4)



I call to faithfulness: such is the theme of the pastoral letter I published on Pentecost. After reflecting on the faithfulness of our ancestors in the faith, let us consider the pressing calls of our milieu.

FAITHFUL TO THE PRESENT MOMENT

In his wonderful book *Réussir*, Michel Quoist reveals important secrets for finding happiness: « *The worried man drags along his past and attempts to grasp the future and the present together. The excited person wants to live several moments at the same time. Wretched juggler that he is, he drops them all and has to run after each one of them. If you want to succeed in life, leave the past in God's hands, leave Him the future, and live fully each present moment one after the other. The present moment is light and does not crush you; it is narrow and has no room for worry; it passes quickly without tiring you; it has a human dimension which you can guide and carry; it is the only living one, it nourishes you, its depth is infinite, and is inhabited by Love. God awaits you in the present moment. If you accept to inhabit it like an electrical plug in an outlet, then light and strength will come through; but in the vast room where you are now there is only one small, small electrical outlet...»*

COMMITMENT IN THE PRESENT

Michel Quoist continues: « *The greatest and most effective of your "commitments" is commitment to the present moment. It forces you to absolutely surrender the past and the future into God's hands, and then to become totally available. If you are faithful to this you shall live your life fully and altogether successfully. »*

A CALL TO PRIESTS

Priests and future priests, the Edmundston Diocese Church needs you to reveal Jesus, true God and true Man, to proclaim the Word, to celebrate the sacraments and build up the community. This will always require a deep prayer life, concern for each individual, and discrete and permanent service. As members of the presbyterium you bear with me in a special way to the end of your lives the episcopal ministry that is mine.

NECESSARY CHANGES

Important changes will have to be made in all our communities and the diocese as a whole, so that all the baptised and confirmed, and all the ordained in our diocesan Church be able to carry out the mission that is theirs. More and more will inter-parish and even deanery-wide services have to be established, whether for youth ministry, religious education, ministry to the elderly and the handicapped, with drop-in centres, and services for students and workers. The enlarged parish or the deanery itself will have to become a major point of reference, an essential support, a place of renewal and inspiration. It will be like a general mobilisation of the entire population for the sake of carrying out the required mission. And constant prayer will have to accompany this mission task; already, from all over we form a wonderful prayer network.

DIOCESAN SERVICES

At the diocesan level we shall have to pursue what has already been undertaken, so as to be ever at the service of parishes and deaneries: religious education, pastoral ministry formation, missionary formation, family ministry, School of Faith [École de la Foi], Spiritual Life Centre, diocesan seminary, etc. All of these contribute in carrying out the Diocesan Synod recommendations and in ensuring the expected renewal. We can make our the words of Saint Paul to the Ephesians: « *(The holy people of God is organised) to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ... (S)peaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.* » (Eph. 4:12-13, 15-16)

NOT TO FEAR THE REQUIREMENTS

Faithful to the mission given, we must continue on without fear of what is asked of us. The Risen Lord supports us with the gift of his Spirit: he is the Road we must follow.

With zeal we build together the Kingdom of Jesus.

With love we shall build up the Kingdom of Jesus.

We pray together in the midst of the world;

We pray together to the Lord among us.

Together we carry the Good News;

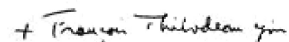
Together we carry peace, love, and joy.

Together we form the Church of Jesus,

Together we form the Kingdom of God.

Let us say once again to Jesus, in the depths of our hearts. *We want to live the mission of your love, Lord Jesus Christ, we want to live the mission of your love together in the Spirit.* May the Virgin Mary and her divine Son grace you with abundant blessings. The love of God is truly marvellous, and *His love is from age to age.*

Have a good week!



+ François Thibodeau

Bishop of Edmundston

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