
LET US WALK WITH JESUS



Towards the end of my pastoral letter, this year, I addressed our Confirmation candidates in a special way. I feel that at the threshold of the new millennium I must, in the name of Jesus, give them a very special mission. I hope that this is a message of hope and peace, as classes are to begin shortly. To the teaching staff and all the students, my wish is that you all have a fruitful year.

YOUTH

I confidently address myself to you who are so full of strength, daring, and enthusiasm. I was happy to confirm more than 4000 of you, these past five years. I was proud that in this way you showed me and my predecessors your desire to welcome the Holy Spirit and to be witnesses of Jesus in the world. You wanted to live the new life you have received, you wanted to become 'contaminated' with the love of God, you wanted to be bearers of the light of Jesus, and become active and responsible members of a more honest and brotherly world; in other words, you wanted to carry out the mission Jesus gave you. How much of all this is left, today? How I wish that these beautiful dispositions of generosity, courage and availability would continue to be with you!

GIFTS THAT ARE ALWAYS THERE

You received the gift of wisdom so as to better understand the place of the Lord in your life. You received the gift of understanding in order to see the Word of God as a beacon guiding your path in life. You received the gift of fortitude so as to live and love as Jesus did, despite all obstacles. You welcomed the gift of counsel to help you make good decisions in your Christian life. You were given the gift of knowledge in order to discover, in the light of the Gospel, answers to life's great questions. You received the gift of filial love in order to live as true children of God. You received the gift of worship and of praise in order to pray, celebrate, and give thanks to the Lord. All of these gifts are still in you, they are vital elements: please do not neglect them!

SONGS THAT SPEAK VOLUMES!

There is a song that we sing [in French]: *'Come, Holy Spirit, Spirit of life; come transform my heart into a fire of joy, come like a cool breeze, like a friend, come help me witness to my faith. By the beautiful gift of your Spirit, I shall be responsible for my life. If I should ever forget my commitment, Spirit of Jesus, be with me. By the wonderful gift of your Spirit, I shall be transformed like an apostle. Spirit of Jesus, abide in me.'* Isn't it a good thing to repeat this prayer, at Pentecost? Then there is also this [French] song by Robert Lebel, called *It Means*, which gave great meaning to this celebration of Confirmation: *'It means that I believe in you with all my heart; it means that I need you; it means that 'my friend, now and forever I walk with you.'* *It means: I know how much you love me and how much I mean to you, because since my baptism you really have been a marvellous friend. It means that I want to learn to live like you, by giving love to the fullest, by walking with a more and more generous heart in my everyday life. It means that I know you challenge me to fight for a more beautiful world filled with new life and a new spirit. It means that, trusting in your promise, I want to walk with you because I know that despite my weakness, you, Lord, count on me. It means that beyond the frontiers, colours, languages and thoughts, I want to spread your light and sing of the Spirit of freedom. It means that I want to serve others whether they be great or small, but most of all I want to be*

with the poor who are hungry and who have no friend. 'My dear young friends who have welcomed the Spirit of God, you can still walk with Jesus. You can bring to our Christian communities contagious life and strength and boldness.'

DIOCESAN WORKSHOPS

To all who would like to pursue their religious, scriptural or pastoral education I want to remind you of those sessions that will be held [in English] during the 1999-2000 calendar year.

PASTORAL TRAINING

The pastoral agents formation programme enters into its third year. Members of parish pastoral teams and future priests would do well to attend these monthly sessions beginning September 18, in St. Mary of the Angels Parish Hall, Perth-Andover. For more information, contact Mrs. Joyce Shannon at 473-3783.

RETREAT

An English-speaking retreat will take place at the Diocesan Centre in January, 2000, with Judge Graydon Nicholas. A very special time to "Come aside and rest awhile" with the Lord.

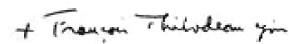
MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAMMES

For those preparing for marriage, it would be important that you contact the marriage preparation team as soon as possible (Fr. Curtis Sappier (473-3003); Mrs. Réjeanne Beaulieu (273-6077); Mr. Harold Short-Evans (356-2956).

OTHER MEETINGS

Many more meetings will be taking place throughout the year both at the parish and deanery levels, whether to prepare for the celebration of a sacrament or the organisation of parish- or home-based religious education. This is not primarily a matter of intellectual knowledge but first and foremost of growth in faith and hope as disciples of Jesus.

May this year be a wonderful one for our Church as a whole!



+ François Thibodeau
Bishop of Edmundston

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