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## « MY SOUL GLORIFIES THE LORD! »

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If it is allowed to feel a certain nostalgia as we reach the end of a year, thanksgiving for the 365 days just passed should be the greater sentiment. Even our more difficult times can be springboards to prayer, because God is indifferent to nothing. So, allow me, here, to briefly recall what we have experienced, this marian year, modelling myself on the rosary prayed before the Lord.

### JOYFUL MYSTERIES

Just as the Virgin Mary rejoiced at the news of the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem, I rejoice with you for all the new babies born to many of our families in the Edmundston Diocese. Close to 550 new births were recorded and celebrated by us! What joy to parents and families, to grandparents and friends! The liturgy tells us that "Every single birth adds to the beauty of the world." We could surely sing along with Jacques Brel: "A child sets you dreaming, draws the dream to his lips; it floats away as a song. A child, with a little chance, hears the silence and cries tears of diamonds. And the child laughs uncontrollably, and he cries when he sees us cry; he falls asleep with gold hidden behind closed eyes, and dreams on, in order to make us dream." Yves Duteil carries us along the wings of his song as he sings: "To take a child by the hand to lead him towards tomorrow, to steady his shaky footsteps, to consider the child a king, to take a child in your arms for the first time, to dry tears by bursting with joy; to take a child in your arms." It is wonderful for me to see all these little children at the nursery and pre-school, and those in the elementary schools, as they grow year after year in wisdom and grace! What a promise they hold, our youth in middle and high school, in community college and university, as they live their youth to the fullest and prepare to be the leaders of tomorrow. What joy, also, to meet the young lovers who dream the most beautiful dreams of their lives, and who can express solidarity with people near and far. I am happy for the 200 weddings which our communities celebrated. In these difficult times it is good to see couples who are full of confidence in the future, and who are full, also, of wonderful projects. And I was happy to meet those who work in mills and workplaces, men and women who are happy with their jobs. Their work is a major key in understanding the positive development of our community. I was happy, also, to meet the newly-retired and the long-retired, people of the golden age: your captivating joy invigorates us; we need you, who are to us witnesses of invisible realities.

### SORROWFUL MYSTERIES

One cannot recall the year 2002 without thinking of the suffering, trials, and bereavements of our communities. The year 2001 closed with the unbelievable tragedy on Highway 185, where five youth from Edmundston were killed. These were sadly not the only highway victims we had: nearly every month we heard about other deaths by accident: ATV accidents, hunting accidents, deaths by drowning, etc. Our diocesan Church was bereft by the death of two of our priests, Fathers Énoïl Thériault and Arthur Rossignol. To all who lost a loved one during 2002, the year will not be forgotten; however, our prayer is that their hearts be consoled by a new-found hope: "When their journey in life is over, they already have an everlasting home in heaven." Let us firmly hold on to this element of our faith. To those who have been sick during the year, I wish you happier days. From those dark moments, may new life spring forth! During the sick leave that was forced on me, when I learned more about my own frailty, my limitations and my weakness, I got to better understand the secret conveyed by these words of Jesus: "Did Christ not have to undergo all these sufferings, to enter into his glory?" It is a great privilege to be united to Christ in his life, ministry, and passion. There were major fires devastating our workplaces, but all through these tragic happenings, what solidarity there was, among all involved.

## LUMINOUS MYSTERIES

On the occasion of the Year of the Rosary the Pope has added a new series of five mysteries to recall Jesus Christ's mission of light through his baptism, the wedding feast at Cana, his preaching ministry, his transfiguration, and his institution of the Eucharist. With Pope John Paul II we can give thanks for all that Christ experienced throughout his years of public life; but Jesus willed that these "mysteries" continue today through the life of the Church. At the time of preparing for World Youth Day 2003, we were made aware that we are all "salt of the earth and light of the world." In our own lives we are called to fully experience the great mystery of light which was the life of Jesus. In the baptisms, we celebrate we discover the greatness of our own baptism. At Cana, the water was turned into wine: it is a terrific thing to see Christians striving to be peacemakers. They are bearers of light and joy where there is darkness and hatred. Through parish- and family-based religious education, preaching, homilies and pastoral letters, let us seek Jesus proclaiming the Good News of the Father. Through our weekly eucharists, may we become aware of the gift Jesus makes to us of his Body and Blood, that we may have life to the fullest. In doing so, our lives will be gradually transfigured.

## GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

We are every day in close communion with the Risen Christ. Through baptism we are called to live his risen life and to direct our whole existence to heavenly realities. Confirmed in the Holy Spirit, we were given the seven gifts of the Spirit. With our 800 newly-confirmed, let us give thanks for the life given us to live in the Spirit. In this way we live the glorious mysteries in the midst of our own existence. May the Year of the Rosary which will end in October, 2003 help us discover the life and mission of the Virgin Mary in our lives. Like at Cana, she is attentive to our needs, and she still tells us, pointing to her Son, "Do whatever he tells you!" And with her we say: "My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour!" Happy New Year 2003!

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