

---

## « FILLED WITH THE LORD'S BLESSINGS »

---



This year marks the twenty-fifth "Foire Brayonne" [the Edmundston annual festival], and twenty-five years of the Festival Mass. At this year's Mass I took as theme for my homily, "Filled with the Lord's Blessings," and these are words of gratitude to the Lord for all the blessings He has showered on our families, our Church, our country, in our daily lives, and through the Bread of Life.

### **ALL IS GRACE!**

It is good for us to recall the many blessings we have received, otherwise we would risk becoming over-spoiled creatures incapable even of recognising these blessings and incapable, therefore, of giving the Creator of these blessings the gratitude we owe Him. Here on earth, all is grace! What do we have, that we have not received as a free gift? Even what is most dear to us, our lives, we have not created, but it is a wonderful gift we have received. In our celebrations and during the day, let us often sing a hymn of praise to our God. We sometimes feel so insignificant in praising God as He should be that we must ask others to do it for us. Very often our very words fail to express our deepest feelings for all the blessings around us. This is our poverty, but it is also our wealth. The powerful person does not always know how to give thanks, the rich person does not always know how to express gratitude, and that, too, is his limitation. The person of faith, however, knows that everything comes from the hands of God, and that is why that person's heart breaks out in a song of gratitude. In our celebration today, let us give free rein to our hearts, to express their gratitude very simply: "Be praised, O Lord, for the day you give us! Be praised, O Lord, for my parents, Mom and Dad, my brothers and sisters, and for the love I find along the way. Be praised, O Lord, for light and truth. Be praised, O Lord, for the kindness and the justice we enjoy. Be praised, O Lord, for the beautiful dreams you give me, for the beautiful projects that stir my heart. Be praised, O Lord, for the drive and the boldness you give me! Be praised, O Lord, for all your love for me."

### **THANK YOU, FATHER**

Our child's heart does not tire of thanking God our Father. "Thank you for the country you have given us, for this beautiful corner of the world you have given us, for the beautiful Madawaska region you have given to our care, for the Saint John River, our pride and joy, for our numerous, life-filled rivers, for our fresh water, for our rich forests, for the farmland which fills us so abundantly with their precious gift, and for our well-kept and productive gardens. Thank you especially for all these brothers and sisters you give us to meet, along the way: For the members of our families but also for the broader family of our relatives – grandparents, uncles and aunts, and cousins. What a network of friends you have placed at our side without our deserving it! Thank you for all those you have placed on our path, all the neighbours and colleagues and fellow workers, all our fellow-citizens with a high ideal who want to build a good future for their own. And these bonds we have continue across our borders. Thanks to the wonderful means of communication, we are in touch with all our brothers and sisters world-wide. We are not an island but living cells in communion with the rest of the universe. It is in the midst of all these men and women that you, O Lord, living God, God of the universe, became man to dwell among us. And it is from all these brothers and sisters that you want to make one people, your Church."

## A WORD MADE MAN!

“Lord, how could we not thank you for all that you are and all that you do for us? Not only have you come down to dwell among us, but you identified with the poorest of humans, the stranger, the sick, the afflicted, those who thirst and hunger for justice, those who seek to conform to the will of God, the merciful and the peacemakers. Yes, you came down among us and dwelt in our midst, but you did even more: you gave us life through your Word made flesh. You gave us your Holy Spirit of wisdom, intelligence, counsel, knowledge, filial love, strength, adoration and praise. You gave us life through your sacraments and especially the Eucharist where you give your Body and Blood, where you give yourself fully to all your people and each and everyone of us. In your deepest being you unite us with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and with our brothers and sisters throughout the world in a communion without equal. Thanks to your Spirit, you want us to be one as you yourself are one with the Father and the Spirit. How wonderful are your works, Lord, and no being can thank you enough. Be yourself our thanksgiving to the Father. May all our lives, joined to yours, be an act of thanksgiving. You who make man and woman Eucharist, make our whole lives be one unceasing praise and thanksgiving. May our every day, may every moment of our lives be one continuous thanks for all the gifts received. But, Lord, your kindness to us is so great and ongoing, make us aware of it every day. May the Virgin Mary herself be our song of praise as with her we say: ‘My soul glorifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices with God my Saviour. He has looked down on his lowly servant, henceforth all ages will call me blessed. The Almighty has done great things for me: holy is His Name. *His love is from age to age* for those who fear him.’ May this magnificent be with us each day!

+ François Thibodeau *ym*

+ François Thibodeau, C.J.M.  
Bishop of Edmundston

« From A Bishop's Journal » (500) (06 August 2003)