



## **From A Bishop's Journal (671)**

### **What Has Happened to Our Diocesan Financial Campaign?**

**O**ur diocesan financial campaign took place between October, 2003 and June, 2004. Throughout the campaign we repeated over and over that there would be real transparency about the donations made. Therefore, I would like to give you some news about how we are progressing.

#### **Brief Recapitulation**

At the end of 2004, we received over four million dollars (\$4,052,649.00) in donations and pledges spread over the next five years. By subtracting the expenses incurred by the campaign organisation and the secretarial expenses for the next four years, the net amount of the campaign is 3.6 million dollars (\$3,601,669.00). We had planned on returning over a million dollars (\$1,241,302.00) to parishes, earmarked \$1,200,000.00 to diocesan pastoral ministry, \$800,000.00 for repairs to the cathedral, and keeping a reserve fund of \$361,367.00, as stipulated in the campaign's explanatory brochure. However, what has happened since then? The Campaign Follow-up Committee set up a new legally independent body to manage and distribute the monies received. This new entity is called the Foundation of the Diocese of Edmundston, Inc. Membership on this Foundation is composed of ten representatives of the five pastoral zones. They are Mrs. Rita Baker and Mrs. Pauline Christensen of Southern Victoria Zone, Mr. Réal Dionne and Mrs. Marcelle Fafard-Godbout of Grand Falls, Mr. Gaston Thériault and Mr. Gérard Landry of Edmundston, Mr. Renald Michaud and Mr. Gaston Voyer of the Upper Madawaska, Mrs. Magella Gallant-Roy and another yet-to-be-appointed member from the Restigouche Zone. Mrs. Jeannette Pelletier, director of the Diocesan Centre, Mrs. Ghislaine Clavet, diocesan pastoral ministry coordinator, and the Campaign secretary Mrs. Martine Hudon are also members of the Foundation committee. President of the Foundation executive is Mr. Gaston Thériault, Mr. Réal Dionne is vice-president, and Mrs. Rita Baker is secretary. I thank all these lay people who are such good administrators of the diocesan campaign, and excellent managers of all the money received and yet to be received. They are an exceptionally dedicated lot.

#### **Financial Statement**

As of October 31, 2006, the Foundation had received \$1,921,648.00, that is, 61.75% of pledges made. Of this, \$458,599.00 have already been distributed to the parishes. Depending on the amount

received in the next few months, 50% or 75% will be returned to parishes, as promised. Important donations have been made by private and community organisations: these donations have been earmarked for the Edmundston cathedral repairs. Three quarters of the repair work on the cathedral has been done, thanks to this exceptional generosity. Regarding the diocesan pastoral projects I must say that without the Campaign financial support it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to set up youth pastoral ministry and family ministry, family- and parish-based catechetics, and the pastoral agent formation programme. With the hiring of a full-time diocesan pastoral ministry coordinator, seven youth pastoral ministry teams have been established and hundreds of youths have taken advantage of youth weekends by taking part of the Village des Sources activities and many other activities during the year: a Teen Christmas, summer canoeing and camping, a visit to the Ark of the New Covenant, family days, a Valentine's Day celebration, marriage preparation, the formation and training of a new marriage preparation team, etc. It would not have been possible to develop a catechist formation programme for family- and parish-based religious education, without this financial campaign; three levels of the catechetics programme have been revised, as well as the Confirmation preparation programme. We tried to have a catechetics coordinator in the Restigouche Zone, but it did not materialise because we could find no one to take up this task. As far as faith education is concerned, the Foundation has allowed the École de la Foi to continue into its twentieth year: hundreds of people have followed this activity and have benefited from this service since 1985. The Mess'AJE sessions [Bible study sessions] are continuing, especially in Grand Falls and the Restigouche. Our School of Pastoral Training has started its activities, with over twenty students. Thanks to the Foundation, we already have an idea of the wonderful service these people will render in their milieus. The Foundation has given \$67,807.00 to diocesan pastoral activities as a whole, and these activities affect in turn every parish in our diocese.

### **Promotion**

At their last meeting, the board of directors decided to make better known the positive results of the financial campaign. Our local newspapers already write about several of our pastoral activities, [French] radio and television, as well as our website, [www.diocese-edmundston.ca](http://www.diocese-edmundston.ca). However, the board wonders whether it should not go further in this by making available to the people of the diocese an update bulletin on the grants made and the results to date.

### **Vigilance**

We must remain very vigilant if we are to achieve the results anticipated in June, 2004. Close to 40% of the pledges made are yet to be received. Some of the people have already died, while others have moved away. Reminders have been sent to those who have pledged, and we are sure that they will continue to honour the promises they freely made in solidarity. Those who have forgotten to send in their donation will be discreetly contacted.

### **More Alive Than Ever**

We have kept our pastoral priority to continue building vibrant communities energised by youth. This is a very high ideal, but it is already being fulfilled thanks to the pastoral activities, prayer, and your ever edifying generosity. By comparing the commitments made in 2004 and looking at the

results achieved, we can keep in mind and ponder in our hearts the parable of the sower who set out to sow his field, and who sees that they have borne fruit and produced one hundred-, sixty-, and thirty-fold... Ours is good earth, may it truly be a beautiful “garden of God.”

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