



## **From A Bishop's Journal (718)**

### **A Multi-Faceted Thanksgiving**

**A**t this time of Thanksgiving, I join all of you in the diocese to give thanks for all of God's kindnesses to us in the course of the year. Following a centuries-old Jewish custom, we must first give thanks for all the fruits of the earth. "Thanks to God, thanks to the work of man and woman, our earth continues to bear much good fruit!" Gardens are filled to overflowing, the grain in our prairies sways in the breeze, fields are full of the goodness of the earth: potatoes, celery, carrots, cabbage, turnips, onions, broccoli... The Lord welcomes us as His guests, at his "à la carte" table!" The blessed tradition of saying grace before and after meals has pride of place, here, in justice and gratitude.

### **Wonder and Awe**

A number of times I have shared with you my prayer of gratitude and awe. This prayer continues day after day. How can I not thank the Lord for all those who have built and continue to build our diocesan Church? Regretfully, and for various reasons, a few of them have had to give up the wonderful work they were doing at the parish or the diocesan level, whether in the area of celebration and prayer, liturgy, sacramental preparation, the church choir, religious education, or economic affairs. They have helped build up the Body of Christ which is our Church: May the Lord reward them a hundredfold for all they have done for him and for the people of God. I think of those priests who have asked to retire from their important daily service, to reduce it, or to take some leave; I think of the pastoral agents, the members of parish pastoral teams who, after 5, 7, or 8 years of devoted service, must terminate their involvement, however important it is. I also think of those who are accepting a new year of commitment, and even a new appointment in service to our diocese. "It is right and just to give you thanks, Lord, for so many commitments in the name of their baptism, confirmation, or ordination. We thank you for giving us witnesses of your love, men and women of prayer, people of faith and hope, and of loving service.

### **I praise You for the Happy Days**

"Thank you, Lord, for the wonderful opportunity you give us to live the new evangelisation, which our March, 2006 Pastoral Orientation Congress so wonderfully restored at the levels of pastoral teams, catechesis and youth ministry. Thank you for the establishment of a diocesan committee of social affairs, a place of hope and solidarity. Thank you for the inauguration of the "Village des Sources ResMaVic" with its promise of being a wonderful meeting place for our youth. In solidarity

with our diocesan youth council and other Villages, may we contribute to the happiness of our youth, and because of these Villages, may the youth find here a place of personal and community growth, a place of hope and love.

### **I also thank the Lord for the difficult and painful times**

I cannot remain indifferent to the painful moments experienced by many in the diocese, those afflicted with illness, the loss of loved ones, unemployment, and poverty. I assure them of my solicitude and my daily prayer: You continue to build up the Body of Christ through your difficulties. Did not our Risen Saviour experience like you inhuman wounds and lacerations? United with him, you share in the redemption of the world. A particular event pains me especially, the excommunication of the Army of Mary. After more than twenty years of prayer, controversy, study, and dialogue, following the illegal and invalid ordination of deacons and priests, an important number of our brothers and sisters have departed from the Church's teachings and guidelines. Even if there were only ten or fifty of their number in our diocese, it would still be painful to me. In the name of our devotion to the Virgin Mary, in the name of our profession of faith, in the name of our love of Christ and his Church, I humbly ask them to return to the fold of our Christian communities in response to the exhortation of Pope Benedict XVI, of Archbishop Marc Ouellet, and of Papal Commissioner Archbishop Terrence Prendergast. May these difficult times make us appreciate the beauty of the mystery of our faith and of our Church.

### **A Blessing for Meetings**

The autumn months are filled with meetings of all kinds, parish, diocesan, interdiocesan, and even national. Despite their physical and mental drain on us, we must still praise the Lord for all these meetings that are as many signs of our common fellowship, our solidarity, and our wonderful mission. Still, I confess in all simplicity that these meetings are often demanding and long. Especially for me, used as I am to expressing myself in French, in dealing with the many pastoral issues. However, when I consider all these continental and international meetings—whether they be meetings of the G-8 countries, the Pacific Rim countries, or the United Nations—, this is the cost of building and maintaining solidarity. What would have happened to our planet without these long thought-out and widely discussed summit meetings and universal declarations? What would have happened to our Church without all these hours of preparation and the celebration of Vatican Council II? What would happen to our parishes without the constancy of committee, community, zone, and diocesan meetings?

### **An often Difficult to Perceive Visibility**

One who would often go through his or her garden would not necessarily see all that has occurred in the last twenty-four hours... A certain amount of time is needed to notice the shoots springing forth, the new flowers and plants, the new fruit and vegetables. Without wounding the modesty or ambitions of those who chair our meetings, the same thing happens with the many portfolios we must deal with together and as Church: the International Eucharistic Congress, lively liturgies, resources in personnel, preparation, and recruiting of new members, priestly vocations... Each

meeting gives me the opportunity to carry out the mission given to me in 1993, and which I want to faithfully carry out according to the Will of the Lord and my own physical capacity. "Together let us praise the Lord!"

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