



From A Bishop's Journal (724)

Priestly Ordination of Deacon Gilbert Doddatto, I.V.D.

I am pleased to inform you that the Director general of the Voluntas Dei Institute, Father François Hamel, after having consulted the Institute's Canadian District and the Central Council of the Institute, has called Deacon Gilbert Doddatto to be ordained a priest. Deacon Gilbert is at this time a member of the St. Patrick, Aroostook, Perth-Andover and Maliseet Pastoral Unit. With the grace of God, I shall have the joy of presiding the priestly ordination in St. Mary of the Angels Church, Perth-Andover on Friday, December 7, at 11:00 A.M.

Who Is Gilbert?

Son of the late Gilbert and the late Theresa Carey, Gilbert was born in Toronto January 1, 1947, and was baptised March 23 of that year in the church of Corpus Christi in Toronto. Following his high school he worked with the elderly, did his philosophy studies at York University in Toronto, and his theology studies at St. Michael's College of the University of Toronto; he also studied in education at Niagara University in New York State where he obtained his teaching degree October 1, 1991. Ordained deacon January 27, 1995, Gilbert was professor of religion in the dioceses of Toronto and Peterborough. Following admission into the Voluntas Dei Institute, he became a permanent member there on May 8, 1995. All who have worked with him recognise his outstanding pastoral, psychological aptitudes. On the recommendation of his superiors I welcomed Gilbert to the diocese on August 15 as a member of one of the two Southern Victoria pastoral units.

And What Is the Voluntas Dei Institute?

To tell of the beginnings of the Voluntas Dei Institute is also to tell the tale of a fair piece of the story of our diocese. Following discussions with the late Bishop J.-Romeo Gagnon, the second bishop of Edmundston, Father Louis-Marie Parent, O.M.I., who had founded the Voluntas Dei Institute in Trois-Rivières, Québec on July 2, 1958, opened a seminary at Red Rapids in the actual Southern Victoria Zone in 1962. Father Parent, who is now 97 years old, also founded the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate in Grand Falls, in 1952.

In 1963 St. Joseph Seminary was completed at Red Rapids, and in 1964 it became a school of theology for young men studying for the priesthood. These young men came from all over the

Maritimes and Québec, Ecuador, Grenada, Colombia, France, Sri Lanka, Laos, South Africa, to Red Rapids. The seminary remained opened until 1971.

For over 40 years, now, from 1962 until 1998, the *Voluntas Deis*, with the Franciscans, ensured the parish ministry in Southern Victoria. Among the *Voluntas Deis* we must mention Father Leo Grégoire who has been working in the diocese of Edmundston since 1971. We do not forget Fathers Alfred Irving, Germain Côté, Yvon Carpentier, Arthur Beaulieu, Michel Villeneuve, Jean Lacaille, Paul Boulay, Laurier Albert, Louis Pearson. In the 2007-2008 pastoral year the diocese of Edmundston benefits from the ministry of the following members of the *Voluntas Dei* Institute: Father Leo Grégoire who, besides being the official translator of the diocese and the vice chancellor, is also moderator of the pastoral unit formed of the parishes of St. Patrick (Limestone Siding), Our Lady of Mercy (Aroostook), St. Mary of the Angels (Perth-Andover), and St. Ann (Tobique First Nation – Maliseet); his collaborators are Deacon Gilbert Doddatto and Intern Andrew Mayer). And also involved in parish ministry in our diocese are Father Roland Poitras, moderator of the parishes of Saint-Léonard, Saint-Léonard-Parent, and Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, and Father Whalen Bossé of Saint-Thomas-d’Aquin (Lac Baker), Saint-Cœur-de-Marie (Baker Brook), and Saint-Hilaire.

With you I express gratitude to Father Louis-Marie Parent, O.M.I., their founder, and I praise God for the charism of the Institute. Mindful of the guiding principle of St. John Eudes who directed his subjects to write, at the top of their letters: “May the divine Will be our conduct in all things,” today the very name of their Institute recalls the radical commitment of every disciple of Jesus and Mary. At the Annunciation, Mary made herself the servant of the Lord: “Let it be done to me according to your will.” As bearers of such a message, the members of the Institute are called to be prophets of love and hope” in the world today, in the manner of Mary and her divine Son.

“To Love, to Love You”

As I raise up a hymn of gratitude for Gilbert’s ordination and for the fifty years of the *Voluntas Dei* Institute, I follow the lead of Robert Lebel whose song for the Institute of which he, too, is a member: “To love, to love you... everywhere and in all things. To love, to love you... in ourselves and in others. Help us stand happy in your presence. It is very close to us, though it be immense. With a child’s heart, let our eyes marvel at each new season and at the present moment. To love! Help us be happy even in hard times, without burdening ourselves with useless complaining. Aware however of what must be said, let us speak it in simplicity. To love you! Help us offer our hand even to those who hurt us, and see further than all our weaknesses. Sharing like bread our strengths and riches, to serve you without ceasing in those who are needy. To love you! Help us create peace in every circumstance, and live in respect despite our many differences. Striving faithfully to be fair and free so as to live and to let others live, each according to his heart. To love you!”

A Prayer for Gilbert

In the days to come I invite you to pray for Gilbert, that he be a shepherd after the heart of God. May this prayer from the ordination ceremony be on your lips: “God who gave your Son to the world as

priest of your Covenant with humankind, to sanctify it and offer it to your glory, grant that Gilbert, whom he has chosen as a living instrument of this service, to really work at the building up of his Body.”

+ François Thibodeau *jm*

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

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