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**« A MIGHTY RUSHING WIND  
HAS RISEN IN THE HOUSE OF THE APOSTLES! »**



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4 June 1995  
Pentecost Sunday

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Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

**A MIGHTY RUSHING WIND HAS RISEN**

« A mighty rushing Wind filled the house of the Apostles, in every language God's marvellous deeds are proclaimed. Nations, understand and sing: 'Blessed are you, Creator Spirit who renews the universe. Kingdoms of the world, sing to God, play to the Lord; he it is who gives his people strength and power. »

Jesus had told his disciples that he would send them his Spirit, and on Pentecost day the promise came true. The Apostles were fearful, unstable in their faith; yet they became zealous missionaries, witnesses to the Resurrection of Christ at the risk of their lives. A mighty, nearly irresistible wind issued forth from the Upper Room in Jerusalem: It is the same tornado which has been blowing on the Church, especially since the Second Vatican Council. Let us let ourselves be propelled by this Pentecost wind; let us not attempt to stifle it, it is powered with the power of God.

We are no less fortunate than the first Apostles and the first disciples of Jesus. The Holy Spirit still comes among us; he always precedes us wherever we go. He even precedes us in our decisions; he guides his people. He is the one who leads the Church, who gives it life and makes her bear the fruits of love and holiness. He it is who inspires our prayer and our life as a whole. He gives us the strength to bear witness and to love, the strength to remain faithful to our commitments as baptised, confirmed, forgiven, married, consecrated people.

At Baptism and again at Confirmation we truly received the Holy Spirit, along with his magnificent gifts. He asked us to pursue the work of Christ by labouring like him and with him at building the Kingdom of God. He made us missionaries of the Gospel of Jesus.

On this 1995 Pentecost day, at the very heart of our Jubilee Year marking the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of our Diocese, I once again invite you to give thanks for this priceless gift which Jesus gave the

world when he sent the Holy Spirit he had promised. The Spirit inhabits us, and this news must be communicated: He abides in the Church, He abides in our world.

Let us try to discover even more what we have become thanks to the Holy Spirit we have received and who gives life to our entire being. A holy anointing made us members of Jesus, Priest, Prophet, and King. Thanks to the Holy Spirit we can offer our entire lives, all humanity, to God. Thanks to the Holy Spirit we can build in our milieu a Christian community that is more and more concerned with the future of all its members.

« God who is faithful and just, hear the prayers of your Church at prayer as you heard the prayer of your Son Jesus. When the spirit in your Church falters, revive it with the breath of your Spirit so that it ponder the work of your hands in order to go forth in freedom and confidence towards Easter morning. »

Let us also repeat the prayer to the Holy Spirit that the Bishop Saint Augustine composed:

*Breathe in me, Holy Spirit, that I may think holy thoughts.*

*Act in me, Holy Spirit, that I may do what is holy.*

*Draw me to you, Holy Spirit, that I may love what is holy.*

*Strengthen me, Holy Spirit, that I may keep what is holy.*

*Keep me, Holy Spirit, that I never lose what is holy.*

It is with reason that we can give thanks for all that the Holy Spirit accomplished in the early Church. Through the Acts of the Apostles, we can easily sense what vitality these early communities had, and what energy the Apostles and first disciples received, what strength was given to them to witness to the truth of the Resurrection of Jesus, even to martyrdom, to shedding their blood.

Everything was renewed through the Holy Spirit; hearts were changed, a new covenant was established in Jesus Christ, and a new heaven and a new earth were given. The entire Pentecost liturgy proclaims the power of the Spirit; He is the one who directs the choice of the first pastors, He is the one who teaches how to pray; He is the life of every baptised person. May this same Holy Spirit empower us today so that through our work, our witness and our prayer, Christian communities more and more according to the Heart of Jesus may arise in our midst. This is surely a wish that can be made regarding the renewal of Christian communities, as we stand on the threshold of the second half-century of the Edmundston Diocesan Church.

May these lines inspire you, dearly beloved brothers and sisters, in the power of the Holy Spirit to work without faltering at building parish communities that are more and more « steadfast in the teaching of the apostles, faithful to the fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers. »

## **CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY**

What does it mean to « build together Christian communities ? » If time allowed, we could take an unofficial survey among our relatives and friends on what the word 'community' calls to mind... It isn't certain that everyone would react in the same way. If you were to ask people of different conditions, practising and non-practising, young and old, answers would vary quite a bit. « Community reminds me of nuns and brothers of congregations of years gone by, a 'religious' community. » Others are reminded of the school or municipal community, or the urban community. Rare are those for whom the word indicates the parish community, and even more rare are those who are reminded of a very-much-alive group of baptised brothers and sisters who follow Jesus. Even if this survey does not immediately situate us regarding the essence of a Christian community, we nonetheless have the major elements to describe not only what is a Christian community but also the means to have it occur. Several pastors already call their Sunday or parish assembly 'Christian community.' Several local initiatives are the fruit of intensive community work.

It is becoming more and more necessary that our Christian communities be real « communities of life, » communities that are sensitive to the life of all its members, that they be like « gospels of life, » welcoming to children, to the young and the not-so-young, to labourers and workers, to the poor, the strangers, the sick, the handicapped. May each community respond to the passionate appeal of Pope John Paul II: « Respect, defend, love and serve life, all human life! It is on this path alone that you will find justice, development, true freedom, peace, and happiness! »

As strange as it appears, I shall use the Parable of the Chair to try to explain the four inseparable characteristics of a living Christian community: « A community is like a four-legged chair: if one of its legs is missing, it will no longer be a chair and will no longer be able to perform its function. » The chair's four legs are the four poles of a community according to the Acts of the Apostles: 1) steadfastness in the teaching of the Apostles; 2) faithfulness to the fellowship, 3) to the breaking of the bread, and 4) to prayer.

Imagine what kind of community it would be that never celebrated Mass or the other sacraments. It would be altogether correct to say that it is not a Christian community. It would be unthinkable to call oneself a disciple of Christ without taking an active part in the prayer of the Church. The same also applies to the community of fellowship: without a true and deep fellowship, there can be no Christian community. It is even THE sign by which disciples of Christ recognise one another. We can understand why Saint John insisted so much on this point throughout his apostolic ministry and how in extreme old age he never tired of repeating the command of the Lord: positive, real, effective love of one's brothers and sisters, especially the poor and the dispossessed, a love that must always be corrected because one can turn away too quickly from the true poor, especially in these times of economic recession. One can so easily turn away from one's own flesh.

Continuing steadfast in the teaching of the Apostles and in prayer are the other two pillars of a Christian community. Without these two, the chair topples... and does so quickly. A vibrant faith is renewed biblically and in the Church at the fountain of Tradition. It is a faith that communicates News that is good for every man and woman of our time; it is a faith that clarifies for today the marvellous event of the Resurrection of Jesus. It is a faith that can move mountains and overcome every obstacle, rid our world of indifference, defeatism, and oppression. An intense prayer in spirit and in truth constantly seeks the glory of God and responds to the concrete needs of His sons and daughters. It is a prayer that is thanksgiving, petition, revelation of the Father to His children. It is a prayer that becomes the breath of all creation, of all humanity, and a commitment to unity of all the disciples of Jesus among themselves and with the Father, since it is the very prayer of Jesus, in the Spirit.

This is a quick overview of the four dimensions of a Christian community, its dimensions of fellowship and celebration, education in the faith, and prayer. It is necessary that each disciple of Jesus and each Christian community wholeheartedly welcome the Good News of Christ dead and risen who gives new meaning to his personal existence and to the history of the world. It is necessary that each disciple of Jesus and each Christian community profess this faith in the midst of daily life through witness and commitment for a transformation of the world in justice and love. It is necessary that each disciple of Jesus and each Christian community celebrate this faith, love, and hope through the sacraments, in the Church. It is necessary that each disciple of Jesus and each Christian community become missionaries by sharing this Good News of the presence among us of the Risen Lord with those in one's milieu. For people baptised in faith in Christ Jesus, this joins with God's project for the world. A Christian community thus becomes a gathering of baptised persons who commit themselves in the strength of the Holy Spirit and following the example of the dead and risen Jesus, to pray to the Father, celebrate His marvellous deeds, to grow in the faith, and to work together for the coming of the kingdom of justice and love, mercy and peace.

May the « Parable of the Chair » challenge us to reflect on the quality of our community life, and may it inspire us to use it in order to climb a bit higher in our daily life!

#### **A PRAYING AND CELEBRATING COMMUNITY**

I know how fervently our people pray: numerous statements to that effect regularly confirm this; and I want to thank all those who, whether at home or at work, in the hospital or elsewhere, raise their prayers to the Lord « for the glory of God and the salvation of the world. » To these private prayers are joined those of the entire community, especially during the Sunday celebrations.

Throughout the course of the year, the priests, pastoral agents, and members of parish pastoral councils were asked to reflect on the primary importance to be given to a revaluing of Sunday as the Day of the Lord, and within the Day of the Lord, to revalue the Sunday gathering. This Pastoral Letter invites you once again to continue reflecting on this question and to take the most appropriate measures to give this day its full value,

to encourage catechetical teaching on this, and to apply the following recommendations, so that this prayer be the prayer of the whole community united in one faith and one hope.

The Resurrection of Jesus is the central element of our profession of faith. Through Baptism we become members of the People of God, a prophetic, royal, and priestly people. The Sunday celebration with the community gathering of the People of God is a major element of the Christian tradition. Vatican Council II emphasised the celebration of the Lord's Day.

And you know that the Edmundston Diocesan Synod (1987-1990) strongly recommended that « The Day of the Lord be revalued, that Sunday celebrations not take place before 6:00 P.M. Saturday evenings, that the number of celebrations be cut down, and that the quality of the celebrations take precedence over quantity. »

I endorse these recommendations and I ask that they be applied by September 1, 1995: Revaluing of Sunday as the Lord's Day, revaluing the Sunday gathering, the hour of celebrations, the number, and the quality of celebrations.

The great number of celebrations has contributed to a real collapse of the community, to the loss of the meaning of the Lord's Day and of belonging to the People of God. We must promptly and wisely react to this state of things. The number and time of celebrations should be periodically reviewed in each deanery in order to fully foster the Sunday gathering, respond to the pastoral needs of our people, and take into consideration the situation of our priests. By tradition, Sunday celebrations are habitually held in the parish church. Celebrations in places of leisure or nursing homes and suchlike (camp grounds, villas, nursing homes, seniors' residences) are to be held only on weekdays, unless there is a resident chaplain, there; nevertheless, such celebrations may be held on Sundays for pastoral motives or special reasons, but only with the parish priest's explicit authorization. Care shall be taken that no celebrations in private chapels be held to the detriment of parish life.

The Sunday celebration must take precedence over every other community activity, such as weddings, funerals, or anniversaries. Funerals and weddings should not be celebrated on Sunday; nevertheless, if for exceptional reasons this were to happen, an appropriate liturgy of the Word will be done.

Reference should be made to what Vatican Council II has written regarding sacred liturgy: there is repeated reference to full and active participation of everyone. Sunday celebrations must always be meaningful, beautiful, and lead people to participate, otherwise boredom sets in and people have no desire to return. Two extremes are to be avoided: concerts and the absence of all song; every celebration - even during the summer season - is to be well prepared by the liturgy committee: a good sense of fellowship, appropriate singing, and a short and consistent homily.

In the next few months it would be important that each Christian community be given a simple and stimulating catechesis on the celebration of the Mass, on the sense of sacrament of the Eucharist.

#### **A COMMUNITY CONCERNED WITH THE CATECHETICAL AND SACRAMENTAL FORMATION OF ITS CHILDREN**

The religious education that Christian parents give their children is often irreplaceable. [In French-speaking areas,] for many years in the past the school was conducive to such a mission. We must gratefully thank all those teachers who gave their all to this cause which they held in such high esteem. Day after day, they have shaped - in cooperation with the parents - the attitudes and values of the children. We would like to have the school continue for a long time in such an admirable undertaking, but today's social, political, and cultural climates are bringing about important changes in many sectors of New Brunswick, so that the catechetical and sacramental education are more and more turned over to the parents and the Church community. So as not to be caught off guard by future changes, it is necessary that each parish, each Christian community have committees formed to look after the different spiritual and sacramental needs of our children. I congratulate the pastors and pastoral agents, the catechists and parents of both the francophone and anglophone sectors who are already involved in teaching the little ones and the older ones, and in preparing them for the sacraments, whether it be baptism, first penance, first communion, or Confirmation. The entire evangelisation which accompanies each of these sacramental celebrations will bear much fruit in our milieu, for both children and parents. The entire parish community will benefit from this. I thank in advance all those who will be giving

of themselves to this cause, from baptismal preparation to the profession of faith, from primary classes to secondary school, even to college: your commitment of faith and availability already are Good News for our children.

### **A COMMUNITY CONCERNED WITH HAPPY HOMES**

Marriage preparation has always been considered one of the most important steps in the life of our families. I am grateful to the pastors and couples involved in marriage preparation in both the francophone and anglophone sectors. It is not only an obligation for us to follow a marriage preparation session; it is really a necessity nowadays because of the new challenges that young couples are faced with throughout their conjugal and family life. The sharing and reflection done by priests and pastoral agents, these last few months, as well as by parish pastoral council members, induce me to make the following recommendations:

Each marriage must be carefully and adequately prepared. One cannot improvise or rush into such a commitment. A future priest must take more than five years of direct preparation for the priesthood; the future religious brother or sister takes four, five, and even seven years, before solemn profession. Even more important trips require preparation; and marriage is more than a mere journey. It has become necessary, before taking on as important a mission as that of a Christian married couple, that there be some preparation for this. That is the reason why henceforth those planning to get married are to officially contact their parish priest or pastoral agent in charge one year before the date of their marriage.

Couples must not be anxious about the marriage preparation sessions. The high rate of pleased participants in these sessions points to the seriousness of such an undertaking, and of the value of the approach used. Couples are urged to judge the degree and quality of their communication skills - verbal and non-verbal - that exist between them, to share together about their feelings regarding such questions as sexuality, their understanding of love, and children. They are also asked to share together regarding what each one believes about marriage, about a religious wedding, about Christian marriage. They can then specify together the main points of christian marriage and even begin planning the celebration; at this point they also learn about the criteria for a valid marriage. They do not gloss over other dimensions that are vital to their life as a couple: money, leisure time, family, friends, work, commitment. All activities that are part of the intensive marriage preparation sessions are meant for engaged couples who want to look more closely at different types of communication, attitudes, and behaviours that influence their life as a couple. All of this helps one deepen one's sense of Christian commitment. I have met a number of couples who followed marriage preparation sessions, and they were more than pleased with the programme. And since most of them comment that « It's too bad that we didn't have this before, » I ask engaged couples to undertake these steps at least one year before their wedding date.

I challenge all couples - young and old - to continue to grow in their love life. I challenge them to help one another along this path. I encourage all those couples who can to join a group or organisation whose main objective is to help couples grow in love and to support them in difficult periods. For some, the Cursillo Movement has helped them grow in the faith; for others, it has been the Marriage Encounter. The parish community must take an active interest in the life and the mission which the Church has given Christian couples. The annual celebration of a Feast of Fidelity as a Couple should also offer married couples and their families regular spiritual and moral support.

### **A SCRIPTURE-BASED COMMUNITY**

For more than three years the Diocesan Objective has been « A Gospel To Discover and Share. » A number of initiatives were taken in most parishes, to learn about and deepen this precious heritage, especially through the Great Parish Missions focused on Baptism and Bible sharing. For ten years now the École de la Foi has helped over 700 persons to deepen their knowledge of God's Word and to apply it to their personal and community lives. I am deeply grateful to Bishop Gérard Dionne, founder and initiator of this project, along with Fathers Robert Simard, C.J.M., and Jean-Guy Lachance, C.J.M. Heartfelt thanks also to all those who unstintingly gave of their time to share their biblical experiences with their sisters and brothers. I derive so much pleasure in seeing so many in the diocese come to the Diocesan Centre for these sessions, and I thank them wholeheartedly: They are certainly the principal beneficiaries of the École de la Foi. I am also grateful

to Father Leo Grégoire, I.V.D., for looking after the School of Faith in the English Sector; this allowed close to one hundred persons to deepen their biblical and doctrinal knowledge.

In the next few years we shall continue to offer the three-year formation programme. If each parish community ensured the annual registration of five of their number to the School of Faith, we would be able to continue what has been so well begun. Parents would find in the courses given serious matter for reflection as well as biblical knowledge to share with others. Education in the faith is the responsibility of every baptised person, as well as of every community. We must grow in the faith together. If you cannot participate in the School of Faith, why not form a Bible sharing group or else ensure that in your parish time be taken - eventually each week - to gather together to prepare the following Sunday's liturgy by sharing together on the scripture readings to be proclaimed ?

Since the family is the basic cell both in the Church and society, I fervently pray that every family be a « school of faith » where the eternal life received at Baptism blossoms and grows.

### **PARISH COUNCILS AND COMMITTEES**

Church renewal - especially since Vatican Council II, now more than 30 years ago - calls us to constantly build and experience « communion, collegiality, and co-responsibility »: three realities indicative of our belonging to the same people of God, of our common mission in the world and in the Church, and specific charisms and ministries. We have the responsibility of embodying together the Good News that Jesus brought to the world. Together we must make it known and share it. We are co-responsible for the future of our world and our Church, according to the grace which has been given to us. In order to respond to the spiritual and material needs of our brothers and sisters in the community, whether they be young or old, working or unemployed, old-timers or newly-arrived, it is necessary today that a parish pastoral council be duly formed in order to coordinate these community activities as a whole. It is well-known that in March of 1994 I asked that parish pastoral councils be established in each of the 33 parishes by January 1, 1996. And this is not optional. A parish without such a council could very easily jeopardise its near future. So let me repeat: A parish pastoral council is necessary for the life and the future of a parish. Church law stipulates that a pastoral council is to be established in every parish and be governed according to guidelines established by the diocesan bishop. These guidelines are found in documents sent out to pastors in the last few months, especially during the pastoral ministry session held last January.

Besides, since I announced it in 1994, a finance committee, in union with the pastor who has the prime responsibility for the parish, must be set up in each parish by January 1, 1996. The pastor must be more and more freed from the task of administration so that he be better able to dedicate himself to prayer, the faith education of his flock, the celebration of sacraments, and the spiritual and pastoral renewal of his parishioners, especially those who are members of the different parish committees. More and more, the priest will need to be a missionary, a man of prayer who must evangelise according to the mission received, who needs to renew himself and be the community's spiritual facilitator. The taking over of the temporal administration of the parish by lay persons is a preparation for the future.

Regarding their community's needs, parish councils must not be afraid to take initiatives, to delegate, to give responsibilities to other brothers and sisters, especially in matters regarding faith education and the sacramental preparation for Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation. I am sure of this: that the baptised of all ages and all conditions, as well as the community's organisations, will continue to collaborate in the good functioning of the parish.

### **A COMMUNITY CONCERNED WITH FINDING PASTORAL AGENTS**

In the 1994-1995 Diocesan Directory, over twenty persons are recognised as pastoral agents at the level of diocesan services, of the Southern Victoria Deanery, or of some parishes. We can wonder about the tasks and functions they carry out, but their presence is more and more apparent. This phenomenon will most likely become more extensive in years to come, not only because of the shortage of priests but especially because of the discovery of each person's vocation, his or her formation, and the degree of availability of each.

Pastoral agents are persons to whom the bishop entrusts a ministry or a pastoral service in the diocese. They are persons whose professional competence and personal qualities enable them to take on responsibilities in collaboration with the faithful and other members of a permanent animation team, to respond to a personal call from the Lord, and to work in a special way in the mission of the Church.

These persons carry out their mission by enabling their co-workers, so as to create more and more vibrant and mission-oriented Church communities. Their role is one of animation, of facilitating. Pastoral agents are ever careful not to do themselves what can be accomplished by others. Rather, the agents raise commitments, support them, and stimulate them. Theirs is a role of formation. They create bonds between the different groups, situate the pastoral work within the overall view of things, and work towards unity. Pastoral agents work in close collaboration with the priests and other lay persons working in the same areas of life.

All tasks of pastoral ministry that do not require the sacrament of Holy Orders can be taken up by pastoral agents. A milieu's specific needs and the particular competence of the pastoral agent determine the tasks given to him or her. The pastoral agent is called to witness to a faith that is deeply inspired by the Gospel and lived within the Church community. He or she must develop the pastoral attitudes of listening, adaptability, and human maturity, and have the aptitudes and capacity for coordinating and leading pastoral projects, and for team work. On the academic level, a theological or pastoral formation or its equivalent is required: The Pastoral Formation Service which has been organised at the Diocesan Centre will look after the formation of the pastoral agents needed [in the French Sector]. According to the norms of Canon Law, it is the bishop alone who appoints pastoral agents and who gives them a specific pastoral mandate for a given period of time.

The use of pastoral agents is a reality of life in our milieu; it is surely cause for giving thanks. It opens the door to diversification of ministries and contributes to a greater participation of lay persons in the future of the Church. Together we shall be able to pick up today's and tomorrow's new challenges so as to better respond to the needs of the 60,000 persons of the Edmundston Church.

#### **A COMMUNITY WHICH DISCERNs AND SUPPORTS THOSE WHO ARE CALLED BY THE LORD TO SERVE IN THE CHURCH**

Lately, the *Called by Name* vocation programme was launched in the Edmundston Diocese. The programme is an invitation to the entire parish community to become involved in the discovery and support of those called by the Lord to a particular service in the Church, whether as religious brothers or sisters, missionaries, deacons and priests - without forgetting the pastoral agents spoken of in the preceding section. You know about the considerable work accomplished by the religious, in our diocese; without them, the diocese would not have become what it is today. These religious congregations worked with everyone in our milieu, from the children to the elderly, the youth, the sick, the handicapped, the orphans, etc. They took part in giving a soul to our diocese. I am certain of this: The Lord still calls today. Young people and the not-so-young, if the Lord calls you, do not turn away from his voice; he will lead you to the poor and the suffering in our midst, and nothing could replace the happiness felt in answering this fantastic call. There have been many missionaries to go and proclaim the Good News to our far-away brothers and sisters. Young people and the not-so-young, if the Lord invites you to share in this mission in foreign lands, do not close your hearts to this call.

The Lord probably calls you to become a priest in the Edmundston Church or in a community of priests. You know that a priest can be replaced only by another priest. A priest has received a specific mission in the Church. He is the collaborator, the immediate cooperator of the bishop, because of his ordination. Called by divine election, he is consecrated by anointing and sent out on a mission. If the Lord calls you, do not close your heart to the call. Get in touch with our diocesan seminary or with your parish priest: you will be the first one to give thanks for this marvellous call.

#### **A PARISH-SEMINARY**

The opening of our diocesan seminary, on August 4, the feastday of St. John Mary Vianney [patron saint of priests], is an excellent sign of hope for our Church. On January 9, 1994, the very day of my episcopal ordination, I spoke about the indispensable priority of raising priestly vocations. Encouraged by my predecessor Bishop Gérard Dionne, by a growing number of priests, religious and lay people interested in eventually establishing a seminary in the Atlantic provinces, I started talking about it openly with the people

of the diocese as well as with the Atlantic bishops. At the priests' meeting in La Pocatière (May 9-12, 1994), there was a long discussion on the timeliness and even the necessity of creating such a seminary: there was unanimous consensus on the subject, although it was specified that the « Edmundston Seminary » had to be adapted to today's situations and be a primary resource for theological and pastoral formation in our milieu. Encouraged by the support voiced and grounded in the hope that the Lord continues today to call people to be Gospel workers for the building up of the Kingdom of God, we can work at the gradual establishment of our « Edmundston Seminary. » The exchanges I had on the subject and the agreement of the diocesan councils as a whole enabled me to announce, on the feast of the Annunciation 1995 [March 25], the creation of our seminary. It will have very modest beginnings, but it will also be innovative.

The Edmundston Diocesan Seminary will be a vocation centre where young and mature men desiring to become priests in order to respond to the needs of the people of God, will be able to undertake the important stages leading to priestly ordination: a deepening of one's life as a baptised and confirmed Christian, a gradual knowledge of the Edmundston Diocese Church, formation in personal and community prayer life, commitment to one's brothers and sisters, especially the neediest, and university academic studies.

In collaboration with existing resources in our milieu, the seminarian will be able to benefit from the help offered by the Centre of Spirituality, the École de la Foi or the Pastoral Formation Centre. He shall have the opportunity to gain credits from the St-Louis-Maillet University Centre in the French language, in philosophy, religious sciences, and human sciences.

An important element in the whole scheme of this diocesan seminary is the following: We not only remember one of the aims of Bishop Marie-Antoine Roy, O.F.M. , our first bishop, when he opened on the very site of our new seminary, the barracks-housed St-Louis College, which was to revive the vocation call, but we also note the vital collaboration of the parish. Far from disappearing, the Christian community of Notre-Dame-du-Sacré-Coeur is given a new mission, that of praying for vocations and of undertaking in close collaboration with the seminary authorities, the most appropriate and boldest means to accompany and support those whom the Lord calls to the priesthood.

I hope that the seminary will be able to offer days of spiritual animation and renewal: why not each month or better still, twice a month ? I also hope that each Sunday morning the parish community of Notre-Dame-du-Sacré-Coeur celebrate the Day of the Lord and carry in its prayers the future of the Edmundston Diocesan Church, of its priests and future priests. May a special invitation be sent to all those who would like to share in this prayer. As for myself, I hope that the day of prayer that is held every first Thursday of the month be held at the Seminary, during the year.

#### **A COMMUNITY TURNED TOWARD THE YEAR 2000**

The year which will have reminded us of the fifty years of our diocese will lead us closer to the third millennium. The Holy Father convenes all of humankind to make of the intervening years and of the Jubilee of the Year 2000, a most meaningful period for our Christian communities, a period that will allow us to grow even more in faith, hope, and charity, a period that will allow us to gain greater knowledge of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a period that will allow us to better discover and share Holy Scripture, a period that will lead us to the celebration of the great sacraments of our life, and a period that will help us grow in unity.

The years leading up to the Great Jubilee will therefore be most memorable ones: they will be a time of grace. Following consultations carried out these last months, I am pleased to announce that between now and the year 2000, five Eucharistic Congresses, one in each of the five deaneries, on the feast of Corpus Christi: the Restigouche (June 6, 1996), Grand Falls (June 1, 1997), Southern Victoria (June 14, 1998), Upper Madawaska (June 6, 1999), and Edmundston in June, 2000. Each Congress will take the shape each deanery will give it: I suggest that it be at least a well-prepared triduum, from Friday to Sunday. This will be a special time for a new evangelisation and a quality sacramental celebration. The Eucharistic Congress will be preceded by the bishop's pastoral visit in each parish of the host deanery, and the Chrism Mass that year will be celebrated in a parish of said deanery.

As for me, I hope that these gatherings be like a real Pentecost for each of the five deaneries visited.



## BECOMING AGAIN DARING COMMUNITIES

A number of years ago, French journalist-author Joseph Folliet wrote that « Christians [have] to become once again dangerous persons. By definition, they could not be otherwise. A Christian cannot accommodate himself with the present world as it is. The Christian's mission is to save the world. We can save ourselves only by saving the world, and this will be impossible if we do not hasten to break down the barriers which separate faith from business and doctrine from life. Our place in the world is not a comfortable one. Isn't the Christian's natural environment one of struggle and his natural act, that of witnessing ? When done on a daily basis, witnessing sometimes leads to martyrdom. The Christian's position is that of Christ on the cross. We sometimes have a terrible feeling of helplessness, the feeling that our every efforts are useless. The role of the Christian lay person is to battle on the plain, in the thick of temporal affairs. We must accept this role of not deserting the world. »

The same goes for a Christian community. By the power of the Holy Spirit, each community is called upon to become daring once again, full of evangelical creativity; it is called upon to struggle, keep watch, and work at the upbuilding the Kingdom of God. If every community is faithful in welcoming, sharing, transmitting, and celebrating the Gospel of Jesus, if every community is faithful in encouraging, seeking out and forming the Gospel workers it needs: P.P.C. members, committee members, pastoral agents, religious sisters and brothers, missionaries, deacons, or priests; if every community is truly concerned with its future, we have nothing to fear: the Lord will always be with us; he will send us his Holy Spirit.

I make mine the prayer of Jesuit Father Erich Prywara who was chaplain to students in Munich [Germany] in 1944-1945, year of the founding of our Diocese:

*O God, you created us with the breath of your Spirit,  
you redeemed us with the breath of your Spirit,  
you sanctify us in your holy Church by the breath of your Spirit.  
We are not called to rest lazily in You,  
we are not called to hide ourselves in You;  
we are called to abide in your love  
in order to be men and women of the Spirit,  
in order that our flesh, our blood, our life, our activities and our suffering  
be a constant breathing in of the breath of your Spirit.*

*Lord, you must come to us with your powerful force  
in order to pour us out,  
in order to scatter us to the wind,  
to the four corners of the earth.  
O Lord, you must come with all your power.  
O Lord, bring upon us today your Pentecost.*

*That is why we give you thanks, O Lord,  
if we begin to feel your moving and acting Spirit  
who seeks to force us, to push us and violently carry us along!*

*Lord, even if we are tormented with anguish,  
even if cowardice becomes overpowering,  
still we pray You:  
Do not listen to our anguish,  
do not listen to our cowardice,  
take us entire, flesh and blood, heart and spirit!  
Take us entire into your holy hurricane  
so that we may in turn be given  
the power to breathe out, to spread, to kindle your divine love!*

Thanks to the marvellous mystery of Pentecost which continues today, our beloved Church of the Edmundston Diocese will continue to be a sign of the Lord's eternal love, and every person, every community will be able to proclaim with the Virgin Mary, the Immaculate Conception, « His Love Is from Age to Age! »

*+ François Thibodeau*

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