



MESSAGE TO MEMBERS OF THE CLERGY AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES, AND TO ALL CATHOLIC FAITHFUL OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MONCTON

July 17, 2023

Dear brother priests and deacons,
Dear members of religious communities or secular institutes,
Dear faithful Catholics,

This past June 26, the first day of a short vacation planned for months, I received a call from the Apostolic Nuncio to Canada, His Excellency Archbishop Ivan Jurković, who told me that Pope Francis had appointed me the new archbishop of Moncton. This was a big surprise for me, since I had been in charge of the Diocese of Pembroke for only three years. That day, in his divine providence, the Lord was mysteriously preparing me for this turning point in my life. Here is an excerpt taken from the beginning of the first reading of the day, on June 26: "The Lord said to Abram: 'Leave your country, your kindred and your father's house, and go to the land which I will show you. '"

I welcomed this news in faith, with gratitude, and I confess to you, with a little sadness in my heart, because I suddenly imagined all the consequences of this new, unforeseen move: leaving my fellow priests and deacons whom I have come to know and appreciate better over the years, as well as the faithful and friends whom I have met during diocesan activities or during social events and with whom I have forged new bonds of friendship, moving far away from my elderly mother (who lost her autonomy six months ago and who lives less than two hours from my residence) and from my brothers and parents who live very close to her, to leave the diocese in the middle of our efforts and initiatives with a view to solidly implanting the new Evangelization Project that we have undertaken together since my arrival, etc.

And the icing on the cake is that in the past five years, by the time I settle in among you in New Brunswick, I will be on my sixth move in such a short time.

All of this may seem like a long complaint to you or like a difficulty for me to accept this new change and challenge that is entering my life. It is anything but that, I assure you. I just want to present myself to you as I am, with my strengths and poverty, with my all-too-human frailties and the gifts that the Lord has granted me and that I want to share with those whom the Lord places on my path.

Evangelization is close to my heart, as you will have the opportunity to realize over the years. It is not only because Pope Francis, in all his exhortations, constantly speaks of the need for every pastor and for

every Christian to collaborate in this task of evangelization that Christ entrusts to his entire Church. It is largely because of my own conversion, experienced at the age of 24, that I have since been inhabited by the urgency of evangelizing those who are outside the Church, those who have lost their faith as I had lost it during my adolescence, and those who have strayed from religious practice for all kinds of reasons.

I gave my "yes" without hesitation to Archbishop Jurković when he informed me of the decision taken by the Holy Father. Having lived thirty-five years in the Redemptorist community, I have learned to trust the decisions of my superiors when asked to relocate or take on new challenges.

I had the chance to travel the highways of your beautiful region several times when I exercised my ministry as a preacher or when I celebrated "Evenings of Saint Anne" in several churches to make Jesus' grandmother known and loved. And these trips have already allowed me to get to know some priests, men and women religious and lay people living in your archdiocese, with which I have just been entrusted.

I look forward to meeting you and having the opportunity to get to know you over the years. But above all, I look forward to working with you, hand in hand, heart to heart, in the great work of evangelization that the Lord entrusts to us, each according to his or her own vocation and according to the talents and riches that God has bestowed on each of us for the building-up of his Church.

The next few months will serve to prepare me for my installation in the Archdiocese. I will soon give you more details about the day and time of my official installation in Our Lady of the Assumption Cathedral in Moncton. Until then, let us pray for one another. I look forward to meeting you soon and celebrating this ecclesial event together with you.

Receive my blessing†

Sincerely yours in Christ the Redeemer,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+Guy Desrochers, C.Ss.R.". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined.

+Guy Desrochers, C.Ss.R.

Archbishop-designate of Moncton, Administrator of the Diocese of Pembroke