

The Ecclesiastical Province of Canada Diocesan Report

Diocese : Quebec

Year: 2006 Synod

Description of the Diocese

The Diocese of Quebec is the second oldest in the Canadian Church. It was founded in 1793. It has a geographic area of 720,000 square kilometers.

Number on parish rolls - 7,800

Parishes - 52

Congregations - 97

Parish Clergy - 34

Chaplains and Special Ministries - 5

Retired Clergy - 17

Clergy on Leave - 7

Lay Readers - 70

Vocational Deacons - 9

The Diocese of Quebec is part of the Council of the North and therefore conforms to the Salary and Benefits scale of the Council for Stipendiary Clergy.

There are five Deaneries and Archdeaconries, one is a non-geographic deanery for Francophone ministry with an Archdeacon, a Rural Dean and four Francophone clergy.

Good News Stories /Highlights /Initiatives

1) Summer Theological Student Ministry

Each summer for many years the Diocese of Quebec has had 2-4 theological students / seminarians placed in parish ministry for 2-3 months each. The summer of 2006 has seen three students in place - two in the Gaspé area and one on the Lower North Shore. They have responsibility for Sunday worship, preaching, pastoral visitation and coordination of youth activity where appropriate. They are normally licensed to take communion to sick and shut ins as part of their pastoral responsibilities.

2) Vacation Bible School Ministry

The Diocese of Quebec day camp programme continues to grow. Children continue to have fun and learn about the love of God, teens and young adults do the same, and also grow in leadership.

The 2006 season began with our training camp in Gaspé for counsellors and adult resource people, where we trained a record 50 people in late June, led by gifted young adults Caroline Mullin, Kerrilee Drohan and Chantal Mitterer. Then 28 counselors spread across four deaneries to offer day camps in 7 parishes for a total of 23 weeks of camp. We continue to offer 2 full weeks of residential camp at Fort Haldimand Camp near Gaspé, including one week of teen camp. Plans are in the works to expand this programme in 2007.

One of the highlights of this year's programme was our expanded programme on the Lower North Shore. The need for quality summer programming for children in isolated communities is very clear and by working with the local community development agency, Coasters, the Quebec-Labrador Foundation, 4H and the school board, we were able to bring 6 weeks of day camp to 2 (St. Paul's River and St. Augustine) communities this year. This has gone very well and we and our partners hope to expand the programme next year to more communities along the Coast.

3) Human Sexuality Task Force

A Diocesan Task Force on Human Sexuality is off to a very good start as of the summer of 2006. The Archbishop put a 14 member Task Force in place at the request of the diocesan synod. The mandate is to promote regional discussion, study, and debate in many settings during the autumn of 2006 and winter 2006-07. The study is to gauge the mind of the diocese on issues to do with sexuality in general, homosexuality in particular and issues around same sex unions, ordination and unity in the Anglican communion. Part of the mandate is to have a report completed to give to our delegates to General Synod by the Spring of 2007.

4) Diocesan Missioner

The Archbishop has appointed Archdeacon Dennis Drainville as Missioner for Deployment, Training and Congregational Development for a period of two years from July 1st. The funding for the position comes from the Church Society of the diocese.

The deployment component of this position will include the recruitment, placement and supervision for summer theological student interns. The Missioner will also undertake to put in place a new diocesan process for work in vocational discernment, assessment and formation for the considerable number of individuals making enquiries about ordination, and sponsorship to ACPO.

Lay Training, the diocesan Diaconal programme and helping parishes in transition will be part of the Missioner's work as well.

Challenges /Issues

A particular challenge over the past several months or a year has been the financial difficulties of one of, and the larger of, our two camp properties. Quebec Lodge Camp has a sixty year history of providing summer camping in a church setting. For the past twenty-five years the property has been used year round with rental of facilities in the fall, winter and spring. It is a large, beautiful and valuable piece of property. Once again, however, the camping programme has ceased to be viable financially.

The issues are controversial in the diocese. There is substantial emotional attachment to the property and the ministry. There are also those who believe the property should be sold and the considerable revenue used for other types of ministry for youth in the diocese. Substantial use is made of the camp by people from the Diocese of Montreal as well.

It is not entirely clear why the camp is not viable financially. It is not a “welfare” camp - nor is it the same as “high end” private camps. It is somewhere in between and such camps often struggle these days.

A decision to put the property on the market was made by the Diocesan Executive early in 2006. Then an enthusiastic group of people with intentions to do some revising of the role of Quebec Lodge and some serious capital fund raising asked for a year to come up with a plan to save the camp property. They were granted permission in the spring to do that, though the motion to sell the property, which had no specific time frame, still stands. The year’s reprieve was granted by the Archbishop who had to cast a deciding vote as chair of the Diocesan Executive in April. A challenge indeed!

Opportunities/Suggestions for sharing with other Dioceses

French resources

The Diocese of Quebec has now a fair amount of experience, resources and expertise with both translation of texts from English to French and also with liturgical resources in French when needed. Two of the clergy in the diocese, Archdeacon Pierre Voyer and Deacon Solange Vouvé have been members of the translation group which have worked on French translations of substantial portions of the Book of Alternative Services. We have translations into French of most Episcopal licenses, certificates, ceremonies etc. And we are always happy to share these with other dioceses when they are needed on occasion.

Vacaton Bible Schools

In the past three years we have had our own diocesan staffing and staff training for vacation Bible schools and summer day camps. We used to rely on Crosstalk Ministries from the Diocese of Montreal and then decided we could develop our own leadership. This we have done in part with substantial help from staff and experience from the Ask and Imagine programme of the Diocese of Huron. There are those in Quebec who would be glad to share experience in this area.