

To our Venerable Brother,

HIS EMINENCE GÉRALD CYPRIEN LACROIX. I.S.P.X.

Metropolitan Archbishop of Québec,

We contemplate these admirable creatures, the ice and snow, the valleys and the tall mountains, the immense forests, the lakes and rivers, there where so many animals find their refuge and their nourishment, these creatures who summon us to boldly proclaim the great Creator: *“O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures” (Palm 104:24).*

This is why, although they do not know the True God: *‘Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made.’ (Romans 1:20).* A good conscience also reveals itself operating in harmony with the universal nature. The Lord Jesus, desiring to make known what is invisible with certainty and clarity, “founded His Church as the sacrament of salvation and sent His Apostles into all the world [...] commanding them: *‘Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.’ (Matthew 28:19-20)*” (*Ad Gentes 5*). The Church has applied herself faithfully to this missionary endeavor through the centuries.

It is with a deeply joyful heart that we proceed to the celebrations marking the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the evangelization of Western and Northern Canada, established by three missionaries sent by Joseph Octave Plessis, then bishop of Québec, to constitute this new mission. Among these missionaries, he charged with the leadership of this new mission Joseph Norbert Provencher, who was received and supported by our predecessor Gregory XVI, and whom this same Pontiff made the first bishop of Saint-Boniface. He and his companions, with humility and great diligence, began to proclaim the catholic faith to all. Following which, many Oblates of Mary Immaculate and Sisters of Charity [Grey Nuns], with the strength of age, brought the same faith to the Indigenous nations, who embraced it.

This is why we welcome the request, addressed to the Holy Father by our Venerable Brother Albert LeGatt, Archbishop of Saint-Boniface, and we thus send a delegate in our own name and person for the 15<sup>th</sup> day of this month of July, to take part in the bicentennial celebrations and to mark the memory of this evangelization. And, as the first missionaries were sent from the city of Québec, it is also appropriate that we should choose a delegate from this same city. Therefore, venerable brother, by this letter, we constitute you as our extraordinary delegate for this historical celebration, you who know intimately well the spirit of mission as well as the history and charm of these regions and of their peoples, as well as today’s culture and all that is part of it.

In my name, please greet all those who will be commemorating this joyful jubilee, specially the Indigenous Peoples so attentive to the message of the Creator through nature, and who subsequently welcomed the Good News through Christ. We would like to invite them, in the words of Laudato Si 225, to: *“An integral ecology [that] includes taking time to recover a serene harmony with creation, reflecting on our lifestyle and our ideals, and contemplating the Creator who lives among us and surrounds us, whose presence ‘must not be contrived but found, uncovered’ ”.*

You will remember that two hundred years ago, preachers proclaimed diligently the Gospel, and all that followed this first evangelization. Missionaries gathered young people to transmit to them what was essential of culture while also transmitting in small portions the treasure of the faith. In order to not lack the men required to pursue this evangelistic endeavor, we have not ceased to pray for vocations, invoking the Lord: *“The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2).*

Venerable brother, we assign this delegation to you while recommending to your intercession Blessed Mary the Immaculate Conception, Saint François de Montmorency-Laval, the first bishop of Québec, Saint Marguerite d’Youville, Saint Kateri Tekakwitha, and Blessed Marie-Élisabeth Turgeon. Furthermore, we grant our apostolic blessing, through you, to all dear Pastors and faithful of these regions who will be participating in the joy of this event.

From Vatican City, the 21<sup>st</sup> day of the month of June, of the year 2018, in our 6<sup>th</sup> year of pontificate.

*Translated from a French translation, from the original Latin text.*