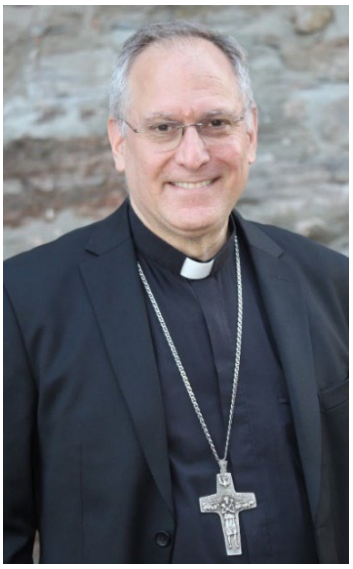
Pastoral Year 2025-2026
Message from Bishop Alain Faubert

« I am with you, to sow peace. » *(Mt 28, 20)*



Dear Diocesan members,

In these times and in this world of fragile hopes, isn't it good to hear words like these? As in the days of His Resurrection, the Lord Jesus says to us again: "My friends, I am here, in your midst; I am with you always... " (Mt 28:20). And as on Easter evening, He sends His peace down upon us , stronger than our fears and doubts (Jn 20:21).

'Does our world have a future, with all this violence, between peoples at war, and even in our interpersonal relationships? Does our Church have a future, with our aging communities and our difficulties in passing on the faith we have inherited?' The answer is YES! For the world and for the Church, the future is open! Because the risen Jesus is with us! He is our hope! (Col 1:27).

Despite all the efforts we might make to bring the Good News to our neighbours in His Name, our first challenge as a Church, is to recognise that He is here, present, at work among us. That He even goes before us to others. The challenge, then, is to share with one another those moments when we have sensed His presence in our lives, His 'signs' and "nods" in the life of our world. As we sing: 'Find your presence in my life, keep a lamp lit'. And open our hands and hearts to receive the deep Peace that Christ sends down upon us like a dove.

Brothers and sisters, a second challenge awaits us: to become the Lord's allies in sowing His peace around us. To keep our hands open, our hearts open, to release the dove to others, to share this peace that makes everything blossom again, that restores life and hope. To sow; to love one another. To say in turn to our loved ones, to our fellow citizens: 'I am with you! We, the Catholic community of the diocese, are with you, to sow peace, kindness, brotherhood. To cultivate the hope of a new world, according to God's heart.' Because Jesus is with us, everything becomes possible. Apart from Him, we can do nothing (Jn 15:5), but with the Lord, we will do great things (Ps 59:14).

We have before us, dear friends, a whole programme for the coming year, with this engaging theme: 'I am with you to sow peace'. We are invited to multiply the opportunities to share with one another the signs of the Risen One's presence among us, with us. Let us also take the time, in our parish community, within our movements and our families, to pray for peace, to ask the Lord to make us instruments of His

peace, and help us to see the situations and hearts around us, that await His peace, that await us, we, who are called to be signs of peace and bearers of hope.

On behalf of the entire diocesan team, I wish you, brothers and sisters, a fruitful pastoral year 2025-2026. As Saint Paul wrote to the Christian community in Rome (Rom 15:13): 'May the God of hope fill us with all peace and joy in faith, so that we may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit!'

† Alain Faubert
Bishop of Valleyfield