

*THE CHURCH IN THE OUTAOUAIS: SOWING HIS LIGHT TOGETHER*

2025-2027

Dear brothers and sisters in Jesus,

The new school year is upon us, and pastoral activities in our parishes and Church movements are starting up again in earnest. As we look ahead to the coming months, the Diocesan Pastoral Council met to determine whether there might be a common priority that could inspire us.

The Council has identified three main elements that challenge us today:

1. our rootedness in a concrete geographical and human region called the Outaouais;
2. the challenge of moving forward as one, when so many differences mark our diocesan Church;
3. and the great challenging mission that Christ has entrusted to us.

This explains the theme that we have chose: “The Church in the Outaouais, Sowing His Light Together.” Allow me to briefly touch on each of these elements.

1. Did you know that the Archdiocese of Gatineau covers a large part of the Outaouais administrative region? It is home to some sixty places of worship, stretching from Luskville to Montebello, from Pointe-Gatineau to Montcerf-Lytton, from Thurso to Duhamel, as well as numerous Christian movements. This region, marked by its unique geography and history, is our home and our mission territory. Can our diocesan Church become more aware of its human roots so that it can better express and embody its faith, love and hope?

2. Did you also know that our region is the second most important immigration centre in Québec? Over the decades, our region has welcomed families from all over the world: Europe, South America and the Carribean, Asia and, more recently, Africa. This cultural diversity adds to the generational differences, the different socio-economic strata of our region, the differences between urban and rural areas and the contrasting spiritual styles of our faithful. All these divides enrich community life, but also pose a challenge. How can we live interculturality so that it becomes an opportunity for encounter, discovery and growth? How can we become a Church of communion that bears witness to a possible fraternity for all humanity?

3. It's out of this reality that we are sent to our fellow citizens, colleagues, friends and families to live and bear witness to the Gospel. It's in this reality that we are called to

share God's love and to make known the message and life of Jesus. The Spirit doesn't blow elsewhere, it blows here. Can we recognise it, welcome its inspirations and allow ourselves to be inhabited, disturbed and energised by it?

These are some of the questions and reflections that our theme aims to raise in the hearts of the members of our archdiocese. Over the next few months, our diocesan team will be propose a range of activities and tools for reflexion to help you explore this theme in greater depth. But it's up to each parish and each movement to see how this theme can inspire and guide their actions. It's up to each of the faithful - each and every one of us - to see how we can take up this challenge personally. Together, I'm convinced, we can sow his light - the light of Christ - here at home, in the Outaouais.

+ Paul-André Durocher  
Archbishop of Gatineau