



LETTER OF BISHOP THOMAS DOWD

TO THE FAITHFUL OF THE DIOCESE OF MONTREAL

Dear brothers and sisters,

Today, Thursday October 22, 2020, the Holy See announced that Pope Francis has appointed me to become the next bishop of the diocese of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. I wanted to share with you a few thoughts and feelings as I prepare for this new step in my life and ministry.

I am a Montreal boy. I was born here, I grew up here, I went to school here, and I got my university degree in commerce here. When my family left Montreal to move to Ottawa, I made the choice to stay. Later, when I felt called to become a priest, I studied for the priesthood in Montreal, for the diocese of Montreal, and later I became an auxiliary bishop for Montreal. I've got Montreal in my blood, and in my heart.

That said, being Catholic means that we are called to be "universal people" -- we come *from* a place, but we are *for* the world. The day I got the call from the Pope's ambassador to Canada, Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi, informing me of this appointment, I was actually preparing a retreat conference I would be giving over video to a group of priests in Newfoundland. The theme of the presentation was essentially how we, as priests, are called to be men of hope, open to the plan of God and trusting in his providence. Some might think that it was ironic that I got the phone call 30 minutes before I was about to start my first talk on the subject -- personally, I think it was the Lord's good sense of humour!

And so, while I will be leaving Montreal, it is not because I am saying "no" to my place of origin, but rather because I want to offer my "yes" to his plan for me and for his Church. I have long believed that one of the most challenging prayers that Jesus taught us is one line from the Our Father: "Thy will be done." I've also learned from experience

that following the Lord's will brings much challenge, but also much joy. And it is never boring! You never know what surprise might be in store!

No matter the distance, I will always carry Montreal in my heart, and most especially, its people. I am honoured to count so many of you as my friends. I ask for your prayers, for me and for the people of the diocese of Sault Ste. Marie, and I promise to always keep you in mine.

Your brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Thomas Dowd". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

+Thomas Dowd

