

## Interview de la rentrée avec Mgr Hamelin Septembre 2020

- Michel Boutot: Hi Bishop ?
- Mgr Hamelin: Hi Michel !
- Michel Boutot: How are you?
- Mgr. Hamelin: I'm actually doing fine! I'd say I am very well. This summer I took the opportunity to replenish my energy. I took the opportunity to visit the beautiful Charlevoix region, Québec, with some friends. I spent a few days with my family and with friends I spent time in a chalet. Nature rekindles me, I'd say!
- Michel Boutot: How are you living this period of Pandemic in your ministry as Bishop of the diocese of Saint-Jean-Longueuil?
- Mgr. Hamelin: I would say that in the diocese we did not stop much. From the beginning of August, with the *Équipe de direction*, we got together, and we were able to re-read everything that happened in order to start the year in a relevant way.
- Michel Boutot: Each year with the *Équipe de direction*, you reflect on a theme or a pastoral focus for the diocese, am I wrong?
- Mgr. Hamelin: No, not at all! I see you are very well informed. In fact, this is part of a whole process of reflection. At the start of the Pandemic, I invited our pastoral staff to be in service. In May, I wrote a pastoral letter in solidarity with all the members of the *Équipe de direction: Oser la proximité*. In this letter, I invited our pastoral staff to re-read everything they had experienced in the first months of the Pandemic; what they saw, what they heard, what they understood, but above all what they remembered, that is to say how this will transform our ministry for the coming months and for the next years.
- Michel Boutot: So, what is this theme for the pastoral year?

Mgr. Hamelin: The theme, I'd say is in continuity with the pastoral letter: *Oser la proximité, autrement ... (To dare to get close, differently ???)* So, how to do it differently; how to get out of our usual structures to meet others. In particular, how to join community networks; how to get close to people, I'd say, the most vulnerable, the most fragile. How to reinvent all our means of communication. Because, in that sense, I would say, that with the *Équipe de direction*, we have chosen three areas on which we are going to emphasize over the next year. The whole communications block: are we relevant now to reach all diocesans? Are we relevant to join and work with community networks? The second pole, obviously, this whole dimension of the pastoral care of the most vulnerable people: the sick, the elderly, the young, the poor, the destitute, the immigrants. And, the third pole: to be able to listen to the Word of God; how the Word of God comes to reinvigorate our actions. Because it is important to remember: our primary mission, as Church, is to humanize our world in the light of the Word of God! What we also realize, I'd say, is that our pastoral staff, like all of our diocesans, are more vulnerable. This Pandemic time is causing some stress for many of our staff. How to be attentive to accompany them and so on.

Michel Boutot: I am wholeheartedly with you and I wish you a happy pastoral year ...

Mgr. Hamelin: Can I afford, perhaps, to add a word?

Michel Boutot: Of course, go for it!

Mgr. Hamelin: At the level of the hopes that I carry, what I wish and, would say, what I expect, and I hope for, not only from our pastoral staff, but from all the baptized, Christians, is to be able to learn from this pandemic. Listening to people, being able to discern, being bearers of hope; to be able to take the road and to create new paths. I ask us, as I try to live it myself, to have the audacity: the audacity of the Gospel. And, what Pope Francis asks of us: to be able to get out of our comfort zones to meet people where they are. A

Church on the outskirts, a Church on the way out! This is what I want and what I expect from all of us for the next year.

Michel Boutot:

I thank you with all my heart, Monsignor!

Mgr. Hamelin:

Looking forward!

Michel Boutot  
September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020