

## **National Acadian Day Conversation with Participant**

I don't speak for every Acadian, you know, we are all so different. But to me the '15 août – La fête National des Acadiens' is very important. This was a special celebration because it was raining – but typically we 'tintamarre' from the church celebration to the local community centre and have live music and traditional Acadian foods to share with family and friends. It's a lot of fun. When we celebrate being Acadian – we also celebrate 'l'assomption de Marie' [The Assumption of Marie]. She was the patron of the Acadians, so we don't all really get up early and go to mass – but most of us celebrate on August 15th in one way or another. We usually just get up and get dressed and go to the Tintamarre and then the '15 août des fous'. So we acknowledge our Acadian and religious heritage through a day of celebration and remembrance. Our history and our religion are lived through the stories that we tell. So yes, the religious significance is important to me, but my recognition of Marie is done through celebration – not necessarily prayer.

It's important that we teach our children too – about our religion, our heritage and the way religion was key to our ancestors. I always hear about the expulsion – and how Acadians were gathered in the village churches, and some of them were set of fire. I mean, imagine, our place of worship and that, back then, how important and powerful the church was. Our families – sometimes only some members of the families – were trapped in there, logs were put across the door, and the whole thing was set on fire. So for reasons like that, for me anyway, I think that's why the Tintamarre and the outdoor celebrations are so important to me. It's like look, look at us now. We can have our religion, we survived, and we don't even need our churches that you burned to appreciate and live our religion; just like our ancestors. We can do it without that building and with only a few Rosaries and crosses. It's all our ancestors had during (and for a period after) the expulsion...so really it's all I need too. I see it as paying tribute to my ancestors. Our religion and our culture go hand-in-hand. We are stronger as a group because of our history. I believe our faith is stronger because of the close ties between our culture and the church. From 1755 until today – and even before that, you can find symbols and significances of religion in our culture – and because of that all over us, all the time.

\*\*\*This text is translated as closely to verbatim as possible without compromising context or significance.