“As Bishops, we wish to address the pastoral needs of adolescents and young adults who question their sexual identity or experience feelings of same-sex attraction. We are concerned for the spiritual good of all persons, and want to help them live out their call ‘to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity’. Convinced that ‘only what is true can ultimately be pastoral,’ we offer this guidance, by way of general principles and pastoral guidelines, to all Catholics, pastors, parents and educators, as well as to young adults themselves,” the Commission states in its introduction to the pastoral letter.

While stressing the fact that the Church in her teaching never condemns persons with same-sex attraction, the Bishops note that “while homosexual acts are always objectively wrong, same-sex inclinations are not in themselves sinful or a moral failing”. (…) “For many people,
same-sex attraction constitutes a trial. They therefore deserve to be approached by pastors with charity and prudence.”

In its letter, the Commission offers various pastoral guidelines, in addition to expressing its “profound gratitude to all those who wisely and lovingly guide young people with a same-sex attraction: priests and pastoral associates, parents and educators”.

A study guide will complement the pastoral letter when printed copies are available later this summer. The letter itself, without the study guide, can be downloaded freely from www.cccb.ca. The printed version with the study guide can be ordered from the CCCB Publications Service at http://www.cccbpublishations.ca/.

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) is the national assembly of the Bishops of Canada. It was founded in 1943 and officially recognized by the Holy See in 1948. After the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), the CCCB became part of a worldwide network of Episcopal Conferences, established in 1965 as an integral part of the life of the Universal Church.