



March 13, 2013

His Holiness Pope Francis  
Vatican City

Most Holy Father,

On behalf of all the Roman and Eastern Catholic Bishops of Canada, and in union with our clergy and faithful, together with the members of institutes for consecrated life and societies of apostolic life, I joyfully offer our sincerest congratulations, highest esteem, and loving obedience to you as Bishop of Rome, Successor of the Apostle Peter, Supreme Pontiff, and head of the College of Bishops.

The Church is currently celebrating the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council. In the course of that great event, the Council Fathers solemnly affirmed the sacred primacy of the Roman Pontiff and his unique place in the communion of Bishops (*cf. Lumen Gentium*, 18). As at the same time we mark the Year of Faith, we recall its apostolic foundation, and in particular the deference shown by the early Church to the voice of the Apostle Peter. With joy the Bishops of Canada now extend that same deference to Your Holiness, and pledge to you our loyalty and support, as together we strive to give faithful witness to the death and resurrection of our Lord.

May the Holy Spirit pour out upon you in abundance all the gifts you need to be our “rock”, our sure foundation, and to strengthen all your brothers and sisters in the faith.

With the assurance of our prayers for God’s blessings upon your ministry and witness, I am,

Respectfully and fraternally in Our Lord,

+ Richard Smith  
Archbishop of Edmonton and  
President of the Canadian Conference  
of Catholic Bishops