



**Message of Welcome to His Holiness, Pope Francis
by the Most Reverend Richard Smith,
Archbishop of Edmonton and
President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops**

With joy and gratitude to Almighty God, the Catholic Bishops of Canada, together with their clergy and faithful, welcome their new Supreme Pontiff, Pope Francis. We rejoice in the gift to the Church of its new Universal Pastor, and look forward to the witness he will give to us and the world of the hope that is ours in Jesus Christ.

The Lord promised the Apostle Peter that he would pray for him, so that in turn he might strengthen others (Luke 22.32). Aware that the Petrine ministry is an extraordinarily heavy burden, we unite our prayers to those of our Redeemer, and ask our heavenly Father to pour out in abundance the gifts of the Holy Spirit upon our new chief shepherd.

The election of Pope Francis is truly a cause for celebration. The Petrine ministry is the rock upon which our life of faith in Christ is securely founded (Matthew 16.18). We pledge our love, fidelity and support to His Holiness as he now unites and guides us on our pilgrimage to the Father.

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

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