

Ottawa, 15 October 2007

His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI
Vatican City

Most Holy Father:

As the annual Plenary Assembly of the Bishops of Canada opens in Cornwall, Ontario, we assure you of our sincere affection for you and of your presence in our thoughts. Working and discussing together until this coming 19 October, we are in close communion with you as Supreme Pastor of the Church, asking our Lord to give us his Spirit of light and peace.

Given the changing realities in the social and religious life of our country, we are paying particular attention to the new evangelization, a theme so cherished by your predecessor, Pope John Paul II. Together, we hope to identify an approach as well as pastoral activities which could better respond to the needs of our day and reanimate the faith in the hearts of those who have cut off their relationship with God and the Church.

A sign of the new religious reality of Canada, we are welcoming an Imam who will bring us greetings and reflections. Together with the Bishops who have been chosen as our delegates to the next Synod of Bishops, we will be reflecting as well on its theme of *The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church*. In addition, there are various administrative questions that we will consider during our meeting, which is always a special moment to live our collegiality in its affective and effective dimensions.

Assuring you, Most Holy Father, of our fraternal prayers, we ask your Apostolic Blessing on our Plenary Assembly.

Yours in Our Lord Jesus Christ,

+ André Gaumond
Archbishop of Sherbrooke
President
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops