

**Report of the  
Episcopal Commission for Canon Law / Inter-Rite  
2007 - 2008**

**Meetings**

The Commission met on two occasions in 2008 — 11 March 2008 and 25 June 2008.

**Work of the Canon Law/Inter-Rite Commission**

The Commission devoted its work this year almost entirely to the review of the Decrees of the Conference.

In particular, it developed revised decrees

- 1) to regulate the *promulgation of particular law* (Decree 14);
- 2) regarding *acts of extraordinary administration* (Decree 9);
- 3) the minimum and maximum amounts for *alienation of property* (Decrees 10, 38).

In addition, it identified a number of other decrees which may require revision at least with respect to the commentaries which accompany them, including *permission to preach given to non-ordained persons* (Decree 6); and the *registration of baptism of adopted children* to include the matter of children of same-sex unions (Decree 19).

**Historical Note**

The second meeting of the Commission in 2008 was also its last meeting. In light of the restructuring of the CCCB, it is proposed that the Episcopal Commission be replaced by a Standing Committee for Canon Law — a name which it received when it was established as a permanent institution over 35 years ago.

The first mention of this kind is found in the Minutes of the Administrative Board, dated 12 November 1957, which state that "a sub-committee of the Episcopal Commission on Catholic Action was named for the study of all questions concerning Canon Law, Liturgy and Pastoral Theology."

Then in April 1972, the Plenary Assembly of the Conference proposed "that a standing committee for canonical affairs be set up" and, in the following month, the Executive Committee established a Permanent Committee for Canonical Affairs composed of Bishops F.J. Spence, and A. Proulx with Bishops L. Crowley and C.H. Levesque as Co-Chairmen.

Between 1986 and 2001, the Canon Law Commission also provided directions for ecclesiastical tribunals in the name of the Bishops of Canada. Following the promulgation of the revised Code of Canon Law and the establishment of the Canadian Appeal Tribunal, the Canon Law Commission took on a supervisory role in procedural matters, acting at times under the name of the Assistance and Supervision Committee for Canadian Tribunals.

The result of its work was a small but significant series of directives for matrimonial trials which served to safeguard the rights of parties, improve the quality of processes and generally ensure an acceptable standard of quality in the work in tribunals across the country.

One can only hope that this legacy of the Commission's work will form part of the new Committee's mandate in the future.

## **MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION**

Most Rev. Robert Harris, *Chairman*  
Most Rev. Matthew F. Ustrzycki  
Most Rev. Gilles Cazabon, O.M.I.  
Most Rev. Valéry Vienneau

## **CONSULTORS**

Msgr. Alan McCormack, P.H., *Secretary*  
Msgr. Michel Parent, P.H.  
Rev. W. Richard Arsenault  
Rev. Andrei Kachur

+ Robert Harris  
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