

19 October 2009

His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI
Vatican City

Most Holy Father:

As the Bishops of Canada begin the annual meeting of their Plenary Assembly in Cornwall, Ontario, 19-23 October 2009, we wish to send you our fraternal greetings and our deep appreciation for the pastoral opportunities that you have provided in making this the Year for Priests, and also for the important and timely synthesis on Catholic social teaching that you have provided in your Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, which many are already referring to as a *summa* of the Church's social doctrine.

The agenda for our meeting will provide a special focus for theological reflections on the presbyteral ministry. In addition, assisted and inspired by your recent Encyclical, there will also be reflections on the mission and activities of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, the leadership role of Bishops in life issues, and the challenges as well as opportunities provided by new communications media.

Our meeting will also provide us an opportunity to bid farewell to Archbishop Luigi Ventura, who is leaving us as the Apostolic Nuncio to Canada following his recent nomination as Apostolic Nuncio to France. We are most grateful for his gracious ministry among us and his important contributions to the Church in Canada, including especially the generous support and encouragement that he has given to us as Bishops.

We take this occasion to express again our profound respect and admiration that we have for you in your ministry as the Successor of Peter, and also to ask you to convey to our brother Bishops gathered with you in the Special Synod for Africa the assurance of our prayers and solidarity.

Respectfully and fraternally in Our Lord,

+ V. James Weisgerber
Archbishop of Winnipeg
President
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops