



26 September 2022

His Holiness Pope Francis  
Vatican City

Most Holy Father,

Fraternal greetings in Jesus Christ from the Catholic Bishops of Canada!

We are gathered this week in Cornwall, Ontario, for the first in-person meeting of the Plenary Assembly since 2019. After two years of being separated by the COVID-19 pandemic, during which time our plenary meetings were held online, we meet again this year with renewed appreciation for our brotherhood in Christ and eager for the opportunity to deepen our fraternity and friendship with one another. Be assured of our unity in the episcopal college, as you ardently desire.

Holy Father, we would like to thank you heartfully for your Apostolic Visit to Canada earlier this year. There can be no question that it has left a profound and lasting mark on Canada, Indigenous Peoples, and the local and universal Church. As the Successor of Peter and Vicar of Christ, your presence among us, as well as your words of healing, reconciliation, and humanity, have helped all of us to take significant steps forward as we walk together toward a more hopeful future. Drawing inspiration also from the personal sacrifice required of you to make the journey to and within this country, we have been further strengthened in our common resolve to spare no effort on our part to strengthen our relationship with Indigenous Peoples of this land through mutual respect, greater trust, and sincere friendship.

This year's Plenary meeting is the first opportunity for our full assembly to welcome in person the Apostolic Nuncio to Canada, His Excellency the Most Reverend Ivan Jurkovič. We thank you for his presence among us as your representative in Canada. We look forward to his address this week.

Our meeting this week will focus primarily on the pastoral action which has been inspired both by your Apostolic Visit as well as by the earnest dialogue which we, the Bishops of Canada, have endeavoured to build with Indigenous People over the past five years. It will be a question of discerning the best steps forward, with them, in our walking together on the path of reconciliation.

We shall also reflect together on the ongoing journey toward the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod, taking stock of the road travelled thus far at the diocesan, regional and national levels, and looking forward to what lies ahead in the "Continental Phase" with our brothers and sisters in the United States. Finally, the Plenary Assembly shall also receive an

update from the Standing Committee for Responsible Ministry and the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Persons as part of our individual commitment to prevent sexual abuse as well as to welcome victims-survivors, including their families and communities.

Inspired and guided by your own reflections on these and other similar challenges, we shall draw strength and encouragement from our fraternal communion, prayer, and honest discussions this week. United with you as our brother in the episcopate, we ask you, Holy Father, to remember us in your prayers this week, and to grant to us and all the faithful of Canada your Apostolic Blessing.

In solidarity, in service to the Church,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "+ Raymond Poisson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

+Raymond Poisson  
Bishop of Saint-Jérôme-Mont-Laurier  
President of the Canadian Conference  
of Catholic Bishops