



**(CCCB-Ottawa)...** The Most Reverend Richard Smith, Archbishop of Edmonton and President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB), has sent an immediate letter of congratulations to Pope Francis on the day of his election as pastor of the universal Church. At the same time, Archbishop Smith released a public “message of welcome”, greeting the news of the papal election “with joy and gratitude”.

“I joyfully offer our sincerest congratulations, highest esteem, and loving obedience to you as Bishop of Rome, Successor of the Apostle Peter, Supreme Pontiff, and head of the College of Bishops,” the CCCB President says in his letter to the new Pope. The letter is on behalf of all the Roman and Eastern Catholic Bishops of Canada and in union with Catholic clergy and faithful, including the members of institutes for consecrated life and societies of apostolic life.

Until his election as Pope, Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, S.J., was Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Argentina. He was born on December 17, 1936, in Buenos Aires. He entered the Society of Jesus, and after profession as a Jesuit was ordained priest on December 13, 1969. On May 20, 1992, he was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Buenos Aires, and was ordained Bishop on June 27, 1992. He was appointed Coadjutor Archbishop of Buenos Aires on June 3, 1997, and succeeded Cardinal Antonio Quarracino as Archbishop of Buenos Aires on February 28, 1998. He was also the Ordinary for Eastern Catholics in Argentina who do not have an Eparchial Bishop of their own rite. He served as President of the Conference of Bishops of Argentina, November 8, 2005 until November 8, 2011. He was elevated to the College of Cardinals by Blessed John Paul II during the Consistory of February 21, 2001.

In his letter, the CCCB President also recalls that the Church is currently celebrating the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council. During it, he notes, “the Council Fathers solemnly affirmed the sacred primacy of the Roman Pontiff and his unique place in the

communion of Bishops.” The CCCB President states that the “Bishops of Canada now extend that same deference to Your Holiness, and pledge to you our loyalty and support.”

“May the Holy Spirit pour out upon you in abundance all the gifts you need to be our ‘rock’, our sure foundation, and to strengthen all your brothers and sisters in the faith,” Archbishop Smith concludes his letter.

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[Letter of the CCCB President](#)

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