



Press release
For immediate release

Catholic Bishops of Canada Gather for the Annual Meeting of the Plenary Assembly

September 16, 2024, Ottawa – Next week (23-27 September 2024), the Plenary Assembly of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB) will gather in Beaupré, Quebec, for its annual meeting, bringing together 79 Bishops to deliberate, discern, and discuss the life of the Church in Canada. The following are some of the topics that will be covered during the week:

- **Episcopal Commission for Justice and Peace on migrants and refugees** – The Commission, joined by Fr. Fabio Baggio, Undersecretary of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, and Ms. Alessandra Santopadre of the Archdiocese of Montreal, will lead the Bishops of Canada in a discussion on the challenges facing refugees and migrants both globally and in Canada.
- **Development and Peace – *Caritas Canada* (DPCC)** – The episcopal members serving on DPCC's National Council will provide an update on the DPCC's activities since the last meeting of the Plenary Assembly. They will be joined by the DPCC's President, Mrs. Brenda Arakaza, and Executive Director, Mr. Carl Héту.
- **Standing Committee for Responsible Ministry and the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Persons** – The Standing Committee will invite the Bishops of Canada to discuss the need to review and improve diocesan and parish safeguarding initiatives.
- **XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops** – The discussions will include a reflective synthesis of the Canadian experience within the broader context of the Synod's themes. The Bishops will engage in small group discussions to delve deeper into these issues, aiming to generate insightful feedback and recommendations. This collaborative process is designed to provide the delegates of Canada with constructive comments and perspectives that they can bring to the second session of the Synod, in order to ensure a well-rounded and comprehensive representation of their findings and reflections.
- **Reports** - The Bishops will receive numerous reports on the activities and projects of various CCCB bodies.

This year, the keynote address will be given (virtually) by His Eminence Mario Cardinal Grech, Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops General Secretariat. He will talk about the second session of the Synod on 'Synodality'.

As is customary, the Apostolic Nuncio to Canada, Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, will address the Bishops in his capacity as the Pope's representative in Canada.

At this year's meeting, in addition to the customary *formal press conference*, which will be held at the close of the Plenary Assembly meeting on **Friday, September 27 at 1 p.m. ET**, there will

be two additional *informal* press briefings on 23 September at 5:00 p.m. and 24 September at 5:30 p.m. ET.

These two *informal* press briefings will focus on specially chosen topics from the day's agenda. Both the informal press briefings and the formal press conference will be held in a **hybrid format** to accommodate the accredited journalists who cannot be present in person.

What is the meeting of the Plenary Assembly?

A meeting of the Plenary Assembly is a solemn and momentous event in the life of the Church in Canada because it gathers together all the members of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB), who total 79 Bishops of the Latin and Eastern Churches across Canada. The Plenary Assembly is the highest instance of authority within the CCCC. Decisions taken by the Plenary Assembly represent the unity of action of all the Bishops on a national level. Convoked at least once a year, the Plenary Assembly considers a broad range of topics related to the evangelizing mission of the Episcopal Conference, including reports and questions from the Episcopal Commissions and other advisory bodies of the Conference. In addition, the agenda, which is set by the Permanent Council, may include discussions on special topics. Elections are held every two years to appoint members to leadership positions within the Conference.

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