PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops
2026 Plenary Assembly

Dear brother bishops, distinguished guests, and members of the CCCB staff,

I am pleased to present to you the Episcopal Conference's annual report on its activities since the 2025 Plenary Assembly.

The 2025–2026 pastoral year was exceptional and marked by several accomplishments in various areas. Today, I would like to focus on seven significant achievements.

The Gift of Artifacts from Pope Leo XIV

In keeping with the wishes of Pope Francis, Pope Leo XIV demonstrated his strong commitment to supporting the Bishops in Canada in their ongoing relationship-building and reconciliation efforts with Indigenous Peoples. On November 15, 2025, during a private audience, Pope Leo XIV met with me, as President of the CCCB, together with Archbishop Richard Smith, Chair of the Subcommittee on Indigenous Artifacts, and Father Jean Vézina, General Secretary. During the audience, the Holy Father gifted to the CCCB the cultural artifacts from the ethnological collections of the Vatican Museums. The Holy See described this as an act of ecclesial sharing, entrusting the items to the Church in Canada so that they could be transferred to the three National Indigenous Organizations and ultimately reunited with their communities of origin. By the time of the audience, an additional artifact had been included, bringing the total to 62. The CCCB subsequently transferred the items to the National Indigenous Organizations and the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation.

The Assembly of First Nations organized a ceremony at the residence of the Canadian Ambassador to the Holy See in Rome on November 26, at which Father Jean Vézina was present to represent the CCCB. On December 6, Indigenous leaders gathered in Montreal to welcome the items back to Canada, with Archbishop Smith and Cardinal Lacroix present as witnesses to this historic event. A further ceremony and media event took place on December 9 at the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau, where a selection of the returned items, including the Inuvialuit kayak, was unveiled in the presence of Indigenous leaders.

We can be grateful that this phase has been successfully completed. From our perspective, it represents a hopeful and encouraging step in the ongoing journey of reconciliation. Establishing the provenance of the items and reuniting them with their communities of origin is far from over and will take time. But the return of these cultural items to Canada nonetheless represents another significant step in the ongoing journey of healing, reconciliation, and relationship-building between the Catholic Church and Indigenous Peoples.

In a special way, I would like to express my gratitude to the members of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Indigenous Artifacts, whose sustained and careful work helped bring this important undertaking to completion: Ms. Tracy Blain, Advisor for Indigenous and Government Affairs; Mrs. Pomeline Martinosky, Director of Communications, and her predecessor, Mrs. Maribel Myorga; Dr. Robert Di Pede, Assistant General Secretary; Father Jean Vézina, General Secretary; and Archbishop Richard Smith, who provided leadership to the team throughout this process.

Launch of the National Committee on Synodality

After the Permanent Council adopted its mandate, the *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Implementation of Synodality in the Church in Canada began its work in the fall of 2025. It developed its work plan, particularly to support a national network of diocesan delegates and related organizations. This network makes it possible to define synodality in a simple, concrete way, create and disseminate resources and best practices, and provide practical tools and models. This initiative responds to a request from the General Secretariat of the Synod that episcopal conferences each establish their own national team to promote the implementation of synodality within their territories.

Last June, the General Secretariat of the Synod convened in Rome a meeting of the heads of the Church's continental bodies, together with the coordinators of the respective continental synodal teams. For North America, which is represented through the CCCB and USCCB rather than by a single continental episcopal body, the Presidents of both Episcopal Conferences were invited to participate, along with the chairs of the national synod teams and the general secretaries. Thus, Bishop Alain Faubert, Chair of the CCCB's *Ad Hoc* Committee on Synodality, Father Jean Vézina, General Secretary, and I, as President, participated in this international meeting. It was a rich experience of mutual listening and exchange regarding our respective initiatives to become a more synodal Church. Despite the challenges, we sensed that a genuine movement toward the implementation of synodality has begun within the universal Church. The gathering also provided an opportunity to meet with the Holy Father for an hour-long discussion on synodality.

The visit of the CCCB Presidency to Rome

The annual visit of the Presidency to the Holy See took place from December 1 to 12, 2025. The CCCB delegation included Bishop Donald Bolen, Vice-President, Father Jean Vézina, General Secretary, and me as President. In total, we met with 20 heads of dicasteries, pontifical commissions, and organizations. The visit of the CCCB Presidency also provides an opportunity to meet the Holy Father in a private audience and speak with him about certain realities affecting the life of the Church in Canada. In general, the visit of the Presidency is very useful for building relationships with prefects of the dicasteries, making known the initiatives and concerns of Canadian bishops, and receiving valued feedback or advice. You received the report on this visit. Among the range of subjects raised in the course of the various meetings were: the impact of the decrease in international humanitarian aid, including from Canada; euthanasia and assisted suicide (MAID); palliative care; issues surrounding some newly proposed legislation in Canada; synodality;

the continuation of the process of healing and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples; and the *ad limina* visit of the Canadian bishops in January 2027. In a recent decision, the Permanent Council agreed that future visits of the CCCB Presidency to the Holy See will normally take place every two years. This revised schedule takes into account the growing number of other international meetings, including synods, *ad limina* visits, and other international commitments, as well as the need for prudent stewardship of financial resources.

The Meeting of the Bishops of the Americas

Held every two years, the latest Assembly of the Bishops of the Church of the Americas took place in Tampa, Florida, from February 14 to 17, 2026. This longstanding gathering has its origins in 1959. About fifteen participants attended, mainly members of the Executive Committees and the general secretaries of the Episcopal Council of Latin America and the Caribbean (CELAM, representing 22 episcopal conferences), as well as those from the United States and Canada. This meeting provides an important opportunity to strengthen ties and foster greater coordination among the episcopal conferences of the Americas. Several topics were addressed, such as migration and the pastoral care of human mobility; Indigenous peoples and reconciliation; sociopolitical polarization; synodality; as well as drug culture and governments. It was proposed that an online meeting be held between the biennial meetings in order to strengthen ties.

The organization of the National Service for Human Mobility

Following the 2025 meeting of the Plenary Assembly, on the recommendation of the Episcopal Commission for Justice and Peace, the Permanent Council decided to establish a **Service for Migrant and Refugee Ministry (Human Mobility)**. Over the past few months, with the insights and assistance of the Commission for Justice and Peace, the Permanent Council has been able to reflect on the desired vision for this national Service, which will be introduced as a three-year pilot project serving a broad range of people affected by human mobility, including seasonal workers, temporary foreign workers, asylum seekers and refugee claimants, refugees, immigrants and newcomers, international students, and others whose movement, displacement, or migration status places them in situations of vulnerability. Thanks to a generous grant, the CCCB is able to hire a National Coordinator to lead the pilot and begin building a national network, with the Service to be regularly evaluated so that, if it proves to meet a genuine and continuing need, it may become a stable and permanent part of the CCCB's pastoral response to migrants and refugees. We can rejoice in this important step forward, which will enable the Service to strengthen connections among dioceses, eparchies, and Catholic partners engaged in this ministry; develop and share pastoral resources and formation opportunities; foster greater collaboration and coordination; identify emerging needs and service gaps; and support dialogue with the federal government on migration-related policy issues within its mandate.

The CCCB Presidency's visit to Parliament Hill in Ottawa

This year, the General Secretariat proposed a new initiative in response to the desire expressed by the Bishops to strengthen the CCCB's relationship and engagement with the federal government. Modelled on similar initiatives undertaken by other Catholic

organizations, the Presidency Visit to Parliament brought the President and Vice-President to Ottawa for a coordinated series of meetings with federal officials and other key interlocutors. They were supported by Father Jean Vézina, General Secretary; Dr. Robert Di Pede, Assistant General Secretary; and Ms. Tracy Blain, Advisor for Indigenous and Government Relations. The initiative reflects the CCCB's responsibility to contribute to public life in Canada in a spirit of dialogue, by communicating the concerns of the Bishops and the Catholic faithful in light of the Gospel and the Church's social teaching. Through these meetings, the CCCB seeks to foster mutual understanding and trust with elected officials, identify areas of shared concern, and contribute constructively to the common good.

The message from the presidents of the G7 countries

In preparation for the G7 Summit that took place in Évian, France, from June 15 to 17, 2026, the presidents of the episcopal conferences of these countries consulted with one another to publish a joint message to their political leaders. This was a first in the history of G7 Summit meetings in which the presidents of the episcopal conferences consulted with one another in order to publish a joint statement, a strong sign of communion, which made it possible to make a specific contribution to the international debate. As president of the CCCB, I felt privileged to be able to contribute to it. Among the appeals communicated by the presidents of the Episcopal Conferences of the G7 countries: reaffirm multilateralism and the primacy of international law; place the human person at the heart of development and international solidarity; protect children and young people in the digital age; assume a shared responsibility toward creation and displaced persons.

At the conclusion of this report, I wish to express my profound gratitude to the members of the Executive Committee and Permanent Council, the episcopal commissions, standing committees and other advisory bodies of the Conference, as well as the staff of the General Secretariat for their valuable collaboration and admirable trust, which have fostered discernment, decision-making, and the implementation of numerous activities of our Episcopal Conference.

As we begin our Plenary Assembly and its work over the next five days, let us ask the Holy Spirit to guide us in living out an affective and effective collegiality. May we continue to bear fruit through the Gospel!

September 21, 2026

+ Pierre Goudreault

The Most Reverend Pierre Goudreault
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