



Press release
For immediate release

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

15 September 2025, Ottawa – Next week (22-26 September 2025), the members of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCBC) will gather in Montreal, Quebec, for the annual meeting of the Plenary Assembly. This meeting is always focused on how the Bishops of Canada can serve the Church's mission at the national level. The following are some of the topics that will be covered during that full week of discussion carried out under the guidance of the Holy Spirit:

- **CCCBC Elections** – 2025 is an election year for the CCCBC (i.e., elections take place once every two years), which means the Bishops will be asked to vote for new Executive Committee members (the President, Vice President, Co-Treasurer for the English Sector, and Co-Treasurer for the French Sector), as well as for members on the Permanent Council which are not *ex officio* (Regional Representatives from the Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, and Western Episcopal Assemblies, as well as Sectoral Representatives). All elections will take place by secret vote and the results will be announced at noon on Friday, when they take effect.
- **Episcopal Commission for Christian Unity, Religious Relations with Jews, and Interfaith Dialogues** – The Episcopal Commission for Christian Unity, Religious Relations with the Jews, and Interfaith Dialogue, chaired by the Most Rev. Donald Bolen, Archbishop of Regina, will introduce its proposed National Ecumenical Strategy (NES) for possible approval. The NES is the culmination of two years of work responding to the CCCBC's earlier review of the various ecumenical and interfaith dialogues which it sponsors. As part of the plenary proceedings, ecumenical guests present will be invited to provide their comments before a final version of the NES is submitted to the CCCBC for approval.
- **Pastoral Reflection – 1700th Anniversary of the Council of Nicaea** – In 2025, the Church commemorates the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea, the first Ecumenical Council held in 325 AD. This milestone invites Christians of all traditions – Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant – to reflect on the Council's enduring legacy, to reaffirm the unity of faith articulated by the Council Fathers, and to recommit to fostering Christian unity today. To mark this occasion during the Plenary Assembly meeting, the Permanent Council has invited Father Gregory Hrynkiw, ASTH, Ph.D., a Byzantine-Catholic monk from the Ukrainian Eparchy of Saskatoon, to offer a pastoral reflection on the significance of this historic anniversary.
- **Standing Committee for Responsible Ministry and the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Persons** – The Standing Committee for Responsible Ministry will lead a discussion on its proposed Action Plan to Implement the Recommendations in *Protecting Minors from Sexual Abuse* (2018). Following the plenary meeting, a finalized version of

the Action Plan will be sent to all diocesan and eparchial bishops as guidance for improving their safeguarding policies.

- **Synod on “Synodality”** – Bishop Alain Faubert will update the members on the newly established *Ad hoc* Committee on the Implementation of the Synod on Synodality, and will outline how the CCCB can help Bishops at the local level during the implementation phase. This session will include a presentation recapping the Synodal Assembly last October, the *Final Document* released by the Synod and later approved by Pope Francis, the Implementation Phase and its pathways, as well as the Committee’s mandate and membership. This will be followed by workshops and plenary session for Bishops to share reactions and expectations.

Artificial Intelligence - The Church’s engagement with AI as a moral and social concern has grown in recent years. In January 2025, the Dicastries for the Doctrine of the Faith and for Culture and Education issued *Antiqua et Nova*, examining AI and human intelligence, and in June, Pope Leo XIV highlighted the Church’s role in guiding ethical reflection on AI. To support Bishops in Canada, the Permanent Council has invited Rev. Philip M. Larrey, Ph.D., a scholar of philosophy and digital-era ethics, to deliver this year’s Keynote Address.

- **Reports** - The Bishops will receive numerous reports on the activities and projects of various CCCB bodies.

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.

This year, the formal **press conference** will be held at the close of the Plenary Assembly meeting on **Friday, 26 September 2025, at 1:30 p.m. ET.**

What is the meeting of the Plenary Assembly?

A meeting of the Plenary Assembly is a solemn and important event in the life of the Church in Canada because it gathers together all the members of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB), who total 80 Bishops of the Latin and Eastern Churches across Canada. The Plenary Assembly of the Conference is its highest instance of authority. Decisions taken by the Plenary Assembly represent the unity of action of all the Bishops of Canada on a national level. Convened at least once a year, the Plenary Assembly considers a broad range of topics related to the Church’s evangelizing mission, including reports and questions from the Episcopal Commissions and other advisory bodies of the Conference. The agenda, which is set by the Permanent Council, may also include discussions and pastoral reflections on special topics. Elections are held every two years to appoint members to leadership positions within the Conference.

Media Inquiries:

Maribel Mayorga

Director of Communications

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB)

Email: communications@cccb.ca

Telephone: 613-241-9461, ext. 225