



Archdiocese
of Toronto

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MEDIA ADVISORY – For Immediate Release

Pope Francis Appoints Bishop Francis Leo as Archbishop of Toronto

*Auxiliary Bishop of Montreal named 13th Archbishop of Toronto,
resignation of Cardinal Thomas Collins accepted by Holy Father*

TORONTO (February 11, 2023) – Pope Francis has appointed Bishop Francis Leo, currently Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Montreal, as the 13th Archbishop of Toronto. The archbishop-designate succeeds Cardinal Thomas Collins, who has served the archdiocese since 2007. The new archbishop will be installed at a ceremony at St. Michael's Cathedral Basilica on a date to be confirmed in the coming days. Following his installation, he will begin his assignment as shepherd of Canada's largest Catholic diocese, comprising almost two million Catholics and 225 parishes.

Archbishop-designate Leo commented on the announcement: "It is with great humility that I accept this appointment from the Holy Father to serve the faithful of the Archdiocese of Toronto. I thank Pope Francis for the confidence he has placed in me. This was a most unexpected appointment, yet I have learned throughout my priesthood and service to the Church that God's special plans for us unfold in unexpected moments that lead to tremendous blessings. I thank Cardinal Collins for his ongoing support and years of faithful and inspiring service to the Church. I invite the faithful of the archdiocese, a truly diverse and beautiful family, to please pray for me as I prepare to join them and journey together in celebrating and sharing the joy and beauty of our faith. Be assured of my prayers for all of you."

Cardinal Thomas Collins offered his support for the new archbishop-designate:

"I offer my prayers, best wishes and full support for Archbishop-designate Leo as he prepares to serve the people of the Archdiocese of Toronto. His knowledge of the Church, both in Canada and around the world, as well as his unflinching service over many years, demonstrates his commitment to serve joyfully and faithfully. I invite the Catholic community in the archdiocese to join me in giving thanks to God as we pray for our new shepherd."

Born in Montreal in 1971 to Italian immigrant parents, Francis Leo entered the Grand Séminaire de Montréal in 1990 and was ordained a priest for service to the Archdiocese on December 14, 1996. Father Leo served in different parish assignments in Montreal until 2006 when he accepted the invitation to enroll in the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy in Rome and subsequently enter the Diplomatic Service of the Holy See (2006-2012) serving in different Apostolic Nunciatures across the globe. In January 2012, Pope Benedict XVI appointed him Chaplain of His Holiness bestowing the title of Monsignor.

Upon his return to Canada, Monsignor Leo joined the formation team of the Grand Séminaire de Montréal, teaching theology and philosophy while providing spiritual direction, training and accompaniment to candidates for the priesthood. In the fall of 2015, he was appointed General

Secretary of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB), a mandate which came to an end in the fall of 2021.

As of February 1, 2022, Monsignor Leo was named Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia of the Archdiocese of Montreal. On July 16, 2022, Pope Francis appointed him as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Montreal. His consecration as a bishop took place on September 12, 2022.

In addition to his extensive graduate studies in Canon Law (Lateran University), Diplomacy and International Law, Archbishop-designate Leo holds a Doctorate in Systematic Theology (University of Dayton/MRI) with a specialization in Mariology, a Licentiate in Philosophy (Lateran University), a Diploma in Classical Studies (Université de Montréal) and a Graduate Certificate in Spiritual Direction (Aquinas Institute of Theology). He has taught, among other places, in Montreal, Canberra (Australia), Dayton (USA) and Ottawa. He speaks English, French, Italian and Spanish.

Today's announcement from Pope Francis follows a process initiated by Cardinal Collins, who offered his resignation as Archbishop of Toronto on his 75th birthday (January 16, 2022), the age at which all bishops are required to submit their resignation. Following the installation, Cardinal Collins will become Archbishop Emeritus of Toronto, while still remaining a cardinal. As a member of the College of Cardinals, he may participate in a conclave until his 80th birthday and remain part of any Vatican committees.

Cardinal Collins was ordained to the priesthood in 1973, named bishop in 1997, installed as Archbishop of Toronto in 2007 before being elevated to the College of Cardinals in 2012. He previously served as Bishop of Saint Paul, Alberta and Archbishop of Edmonton, Alberta before coming to Toronto. In his retirement, Cardinal Collins will continue to reside in the Archdiocese of Toronto.

The Archdiocese of Toronto, Canada's largest diocese, is one of the most diverse faith communities in North America, serving as the spiritual home to approximately two million Catholics with close to 400 priests celebrating Mass in more than 30 languages each week at 225 parishes. The archdiocese stretches from Toronto north to Georgian Bay and from Oshawa to Mississauga.

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Click [here](#) to access a special greeting from Archbishop-designate Leo to the faithful of the Archdiocese of Toronto.

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