



MEDIA ADVISORY – For Immediate Release

This Weekend in Rome: At Ceremony with Pope Francis, Canadian Archbishop Elevated to the College of Cardinals

TORONTO (December 5, 2024) – This weekend at the Vatican, Pope Francis will preside at a Consistory to elevate 21 Catholic bishops to the College of Cardinals. Among them will be the only North American in the “Class of 2024”, the Most Rev. Frank Leo, Metropolitan Archbishop of Toronto.

At the December 7 Consistory, Pope Francis will present each new cardinal with a biretta and ring, as the new cardinals wear scarlet vestments for the first time, symbolic of the blood a cardinal is willing to shed for their faith. The Holy Father will also preside at Mass at St. Peter’s Basilica on Sunday, December 8 with the newest cardinals in attendance as well as those who have traveled from far and wide to offer their prayerful support.

Cardinals serve as close advisors to the Holy Father and participate whenever there is a papal conclave, as voting members, to select the next pope. Taking into account the newest members of the College of Cardinals, there will be 253 cardinals, including 140 cardinal-electors. Cardinals are eligible to vote in a papal conclave until they reach their 80th birthday. Archbishop Emeritus Cardinal Thomas Collins of Toronto remains a cardinal-electer until January of 2027. Other cardinal-electors from Canada include Gérald Cardinal Lacroix of the Archdiocese of Quebec and Michael Cardinal Czerny, SJ, Prefect of the Vatican’s Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. Retired Marc Cardinal Ouellet reached the age of 80 earlier this year.

Born in Montreal in 1971 to Italian immigrant parents, Frank Leo entered the Grand Séminaire de Montréal in 1990 and was ordained a priest for service to the Archdiocese of Montreal 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.

In February 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. He was

appointed Archbishop of Toronto on February 11, 2023 and formally installed on Saturday, March 25, 2023.

In addition to his extensive graduate studies in Canon Law (Lateran University), Diplomacy and International Law, Cardinal-elect 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.

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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NOTE TO MEDIA: A special site: www.archtoronto.org/media contains extensive information on Cardinal-elect Leo, including photos for use in stories as well as background information on the role of cardinals in the Catholic Church. Journalists are welcome to use this resource for their stories as appropriate.

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