



Archdiocese
of Toronto

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MEDIA ADVISORY – For Immediate Release

Pope Francis Elevates Archbishop Francis Leo to the College of Cardinals

TORONTO (October 6, 2024) – Pope Francis has announced that Metropolitan Archbishop of Toronto, the Most Rev. Francis Leo will be elevated to the College of Cardinals. The announcement came at the conclusion of the Holy Father’s Sunday Angelus in Rome.

The Holy Father will hold a Consistory for the creation of the new Cardinals on December 8, 2024 at the Vatican. 21 new Cardinals from around the world were included in the announcement.

Cardinal-elect Leo commented on the appointment:

“I am humbled and honoured to receive this appointment from the Holy Father. I pray and rely on the prayers of the faithful in Toronto that I will be a worthy servant of the Lord Jesus in fulfilling my responsibilities as a member of the College of Cardinals and to continue in my primary role as shepherd of the faithful of the Archdiocese of Toronto. I entrust to the Blessed Mother Mary, myself and this new ministry of service to the Universal Church and to the Successor of St. Peter, the Pope.”

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 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 (CCCC), 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. 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, 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.

Cardinals serve as close advisors to the Holy Father and participate whenever there is a conclave, as voting members, to select the next Pope. Following today's announcement, including the new Cardinal-electors, there will be 256 cardinals, including 141 Cardinal electors. Cardinals are eligible to vote in conclave until they reach their 80th birthday. Archbishop Emeritus Cardinal Thomas Collins of Toronto remains a cardinal elector until January of 2027. Other Cardinal-electors from Canada include Cardinal Gérald Lacroix of the Archdiocese of Quebec and Cardinal Michael Czerny, SJ, Prefect of the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. Retired Cardinal Marc Ouellet reached the age of 80 earlier this year.

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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