



12 September 2019

Rev. Stephen Kendall
President
Canadian Council of Churches
47 Queen's Park Cres East
Toronto, ON M5S 2C3

Dear Rev. Kendall,

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

On behalf of the Catholic Bishops of Canada, I wish to extend to the Canadian Council of Churches, to you as its President and likewise to its member churches and associate members, heartfelt congratulations and prayerful gratitude on the 75th anniversary of the Council. On 26 September 1944 the Council's ecumenical mission was inaugurated by a worship service at Yorkminster Park Baptist Church in Toronto. The start of this significant ecumenical endeavour occurred during the dark days of the Second World War and provided an important witness to the possibilities of human solidarity, mutual collaboration and common efforts to achieve and sustain peace, despite the divisions among Christians.

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops became a full member of the Council in 1997 after having been an associate member since 1986 and having collaborated with it in many ways prior to the 1980s. In a CCCB letter addressed to then CCC President Dr. Alexandra Johnston of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, with the purpose of requesting full membership, then-CCCB President Archbishop Francis J. Spence of Kingston noted that "Collaboration and communal sharing over the years will continue to nourish our ecumenical witness and common hope through biblical and theological dialogue, pastoral programs, justice work in common, inter-church coalitions and other diverse conversations and engagements with our society and culture." This sense of collaboration and Christian engagement has certainly marked the CCCB's experiences with the CCC over the years, and the Catholic Bishops of Canada are particularly grateful for the commitment by the CCC to the Forum model of decision-making, which the CCCB and other members were recommending at the time, and likewise the various efforts since then to ensure that French language and a bilingual perspective find practical expression within the CCC.

As remarked by the Second Vatican Council's Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, the restoration of unity among all Christians is a "principal concern" of the Catholic Church.¹ We are grateful to the Holy Trinity that this commitment, which has been ardently taken up by the Catholic Bishops of Canada, is also supported and nourished by the work of the CCC and its members. May Our Lord Jesus Christ continue to bless and guide our endeavours so that the unity He prayed for may continually guide and strengthen our resolve and collaboration.

Sincerely yours in Christ the Good Shepherd,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Lionel Gendron, P.S.S." The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

+ Lionel Gendron, P.S.S.
Bishop of Saint-Jean-Longueuil and
President of the Canadian Conference
of Catholic Bishops

Cc: Mr. Peter Noteboom, Canadian Council of Churches General Secretary

¹ Unitatis Redintegratio, 1. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19641121_unitatis-redintegratio_en.html