



**Invitation from the President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops,
The Most Rev. William T. McGrattan, Bishop of Calgary,
to all the Catholic Faithful in Canada
on the Occasion of
the Conclave to Elect the 267th Successor of Saint Peter**

This Wednesday, May 7th, 133 Cardinals from across the world will gather in a solemn assembly to begin the process of electing a new Pope—the 267th Successor of Saint Peter. This process, known as a *conclave*, takes place behind the closed doors of the Sistine Chapel. The term *conclave* comes from the Latin *cum clavis*, meaning "with key," symbolizing a place that is securely locked.

The conclave recalls the gathering of the Apostles in the Upper Room before Pentecost, where they “constantly devoted themselves to prayer” (Acts 1:13–14). Unlike modern portrayals in popular media, the conclave is first and foremost a deeply spiritual event. It is carried out with solemn liturgical acts and constant prayer, as emphasized in the *Order of the Sacred Rites of a Conclave*. The Cardinals undertake this sacred responsibility under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, whom they invoke in order to hear God’s voice and discern His will.

In that same spirit of prayer, the rites of the conclave envision that the faithful are praying alongside the Cardinal-electors. As the *Order* states: “the whole church, united with us [the Cardinal electors] in prayer, invokes the grace of the Holy Spirit so that we may elect a worthy pastor of the entire flock of Christ.” I therefore invite you—clergy, consecrated men and women, and lay faithful—to join your prayers with those of your local Ordinary, asking the Holy Spirit to grant the Cardinals wisdom, faith, and discernment as they carry out this sacred task.

There are many meaningful ways to pray for the conclave. One may choose to pray daily the ancient hymn *Veni, Creator Spiritus* (“Come, O Creator Spirit”), echoing the Apostles’ prayerful anticipation after Christ’s Ascension. Alternatively, one could pray the beautiful Collect from the Mass for the Election of a Pope:

O God, Eternal Shepherd, who govern your flock with unfailing care, grant in your boundless fatherly love a pastor for your Church who will please you by his holiness and to us show watchful care.

With the support of your prayers, may God's will be accomplished. And when the time comes, may you joyfully welcome the newly elected Pastor of the Universal Church, with a renewed awareness that Christ “placed Blessed Peter over the other Apostles and instituted in him a permanent and visible source and foundation of unity of faith and communion” (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 18).

5 May 2025