



ASSEMBLY OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE DES ÉVÊQUES CATHOLIQUES DE L'ONTARIO

LIAISON

March 2010

The members of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario held their Spring Plenary Meeting from March 22 – 24, 2010.

The members of the Executive Committee were re-elected for the 2010-2012 term of office:

- President: Most Rev. Thomas Collins, Archbishop of Toronto
- Vice-President: Most Rev. R. Anthony Daniels, Auxiliary Bishop of London
- Member: Most Rev. Brendan O'Brien, Archbishop of Kingston
- Member: Most Rev. Jean-Louis Plouffe, Bishop of Sault Ste Marie

Chairs and members of the various ACBO Commission and Committees and the Liaison Bishops to designated Catholic organizations were appointed for the 2010-2012 term of office.

Apostolic Nuncio

The bishops welcomed to the meeting Canada's recently-appointed Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Pedro López Quintana, and the Nunciature's chargé d'affaires Msgr. Luca Lorusso. Archbishop Quintana warmly greeted the Ontario bishops, describing the office of the Apostolic Nunciature as an "instrument of the communion of the Church". After briefly providing his biography, the Nuncio referred to the challenge of the "New Evangelization" in western countries. Acknowledging the patronage of St. Joseph, Archbishop Quintana commented that there were many signs of hope for the Church in Canada, and asked bishops to courageously promote those signs of hope and renewal in the Church. His Grace offered his prayers and support to the bishops.

Several presentations were made to the bishops over the course of the Plenary:

- Lou Rocha, on the efforts of various Catholic education partners in support of publicly-funded Catholic education in Ontario
- Pat Csinos on the Canadian Certificate in Youth Ministry Studies
- Fr. Isidoro Tomasoni, of the Neocatechumenal Way, on the gathering of bishops in the Holy Land in January, 2011

The bishops received reports on the work of all of the Assembly's Commissions and Committees. Following are highlights of those reports:

The Executive Committee

Refugee Sponsorship Program: The General Secretary reported on the highly successful First National Catholic Conference on Refugee Sponsorship which was held January 13 – 15, 2010 at the Manresa Jesuit Spiritual Centre in Pickering. It was

co-hosted by representatives from the Archdiocese of Toronto and the Diocese of London. The Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario supported the organization of the conference with human and financial resources.

Ministry to the Deaf: The General Secretary reported on the Executive Committee's approval to continue financial support for two regional annual seminars for those involved in Ministry to the Deaf.

Development and implementation of an Enculturation Program for International Priests to be organized by the Institute for Catholic Formation at St. Peter's Seminary in London, and St. Paul's University in Ottawa, was endorsed by the bishops.

Education Commission

(i) English Language Catholic Education

The bishops endorsed the undertaking of a consultative process during the 2010-2011 school year, with the intent to develop a combined Family Life Education / Religious Education program to the Kindergarten curriculum in light of the gradual implementation of the full-day Early Learning Program.

The bishops endorsed a proposal to undertake a study for the purpose of revising or replacing the current Catechetical texts (Grades 1 – 8).

The Catholic Consortium's draft documents re Ontario's "Equity and Inclusive Education Policy" and "Religious Accommodation Guideline" were reviewed and revised statements were endorsed in the Religious Accommodation Guideline document.

The Institute for Catholic Education's report included information on the following:

- Development of an electronic learning resource for the Fully Alive Program (Grades 1-8) as a professional development resource for teachers
- Fully Alive: Publication of Revised Grade 7 student and teacher books (Spring 2010) and revision/publication of Grade 8 during school year 2010-2011
- A document detailing the development of a Catholic version of the Ministry of Education's Health and Physical Education Policy Document through revisions to align it with the Fully Alive Program
- Publication of Grade 11 World Religions Textbook – Spring 2010
- Update regarding the English Catholic Education Symposium – May, 2011
- Review of the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations and Document on Best Practices

(ii) French Language Catholic Education:

L'Office provincial de l'éducation de la foi catholique de l'Ontario (OPÉCO) reported on:

- Update on School-Family-Parish collaboration

- Pamphlet describing a user-friendly method for scripture study which will be piloted in some dioceses, modified if needed, with the final version to be ready in June 2010
- In-service sessions for the implementation of the new curriculum guidelines in Religious Studies for Catholic French language secondary schools in the province to commence in spring 2010.
- Revision of textbooks for Religious Studies, grades 4, 5 & 6 has commenced.
- Religious and Cultural Identity document is now available and a copy was distributed to Plenary participants. Training sessions are being organized.
- Additional Qualifications Courses: AEFO has received an extension of its mandate for accreditation as the approved course provider for the Religious Education AQ courses. CFORP hopes to receive approval as provider by September 2010. An Advisory Committee will be formed by CODEC, OPECO and CFORP.
- Ontario's "Equity and Inclusive Education Policy": OPECO, CODEC and AFOCSC are working with the English language Catholic education community to develop a Catholic version of the policy and accompanying guideline. Committees have been set up to develop the policies so that they will reflect the specific needs of each type of school board.
- Update on planning for the French language Education Symposium – May, 2011

Insurance Management Board

Implementation of a Diocesan Electrical Assessment Program on a gradual basis was endorsed by the bishops as a risk management measure.

Implementation of an on-line training program for diocesan employees was endorsed as a risk mitigation measure to assist in reducing employee injuries in the workplace.

Commission for Priests

Bishops were informed of the upcoming Symposium for Newly Ordained Priests which will take place from November 15-19, 2010, at the Mount Carmel Retreat Centre in Niagara Falls.

Social Affairs Commission

Bishops were provided with contact information for the various local offices of the Social Planning Network of Ontario with a view to the potential for collaboration on mutually agreed-upon social justice initiatives, especially activities that assist in the area of child poverty reduction, affordable housing, affordable food and advocacy for the poor.

The Commission's report described opportunities for involvement in the province-wide Social Audit being conducted by the Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition (ISARC), which has the support of ACBO.

The bishops endorsed a proposal to develop a parish and school-based Study Guide for the Papal Encyclical "Caritas in Veritate".

**Ontario Conference for Christian Unity,
Religious Relations with the Jews and Inter-faith Dialogue**

The bishops were informed that in 2010 the Conference would hold one meeting (in April) to be organized in a working session format, and a second meeting (in November) to be organized as an education / information session. This change from one to two meetings per year acknowledges that it is important to actively pursue inter-faith dialogue given that “ecumenism is at the heart of the mission of the Church”.

Bishops were invited to send diocesan ecumenism representatives to the 2010 meetings.

Ontario Liturgical Conference

Bishops noted that diocesan teams have been invited to the annual meeting of the Ontario Liturgical Conference (Kingston, May 3-5, 2010) in order to prepare for the implementation of the New Roman Missal and its General Instruction.

Next Plenary Meeting

The next Plenary meeting will be held from October 4th – 6th, 2010.

Report submitted by:
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General Secretary