



Infofax



Ad Limina Visit

From April 20th to May 5th, I will be in Rome with the other Ontario bishops for the *Ad Limina* Visit. This is the duty of Bishops prescribed by the Code of Canon Law: *“A diocesan bishop is to go to Rome to venerate the tombs of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul and to present himself to the Roman Pontiff.”*(Canon 400 § 1)

This visit is a way of expressing a fundamental element of the faith: our connection with the Pope, Successor of Saint Peter, Bishop of Rome, visible principle of the unity of the Church. This is what we proclaim in the *‘I believe in God’*: we say that we believe in *‘one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church’*. We also express this union with the Pope when we mention his name at the heart of the Eucharistic Prayer.

- 1- The *ad limina apostolorum* visit (‘at the threshold of the Apostles’) is first of all a pilgrimage to the tomb of the Apostles. We will celebrate holy mass on the tomb of Saint Peter, preserved in Saint Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican, erected in 350 and rebuilt between 1500 et 1622; on the tomb of Saint Paul preserved in Saint Paul Outside the Walls Basilica, erected in 390, then in 1854. We will also pray at the Basilica of Saint Mary Major, the first church consecrated historically to the Blessed Virgin (toward 366), then pray at the Basilica of Saint John Lateran, Cathedral of Rome and the first church built in 324 after the end of the persecutions against Christians. It is impressive to realize the continuity of the Church through the centuries since the Apostles.
- 2- We will meet the Holy Father at an audience. His Excellency Bishop Ronald Fabbro, Bishop of London and President of the Assembly of Bishops of Ontario, will present to him the situation of the Church in our province, the challenges that we face in spreading the Gospel, the resources that we have. ...
- 3- The Pope will undoubtedly address matters that are close to his heart. He is well informed about the life of our dioceses since last Fall each Bishop sent him a Report on his diocese describing in detail: geography, population, parishes, ministries, education, institutions, movements...
- 4- We will also meet the Roman Curia, the central organism that assists the Holy Father with the care of the universal Church. It includes different dicasteries (similar to ministries of a government) to whom are entrusted certain specific sectors of the life of the Church: Doctrine of the Faith, Causes

of Saints, Bishops, priests, men and women religious, the laity (family and life), Divine Worship, Catholic Education, Evangelization, Oriental Churches, Integral Human Development (the sick, refugees, victims of wars and disasters), Christian unity, interreligious dialogue...

- 5- The dialogue with those responsible for these dicasteries is enriching: on the one hand it allows us to present the Canadian situation and on the other, to better perceive the universal dimension of our Church. I would like to remind you that I was a member of the Roman Curia (2010-2012). In fact, at the time of my appointment as Bishop of Timmins, I was adjunct Undersecretary of the Congregation for Bishops. I will therefore have the opportunity of meeting again His Eminence Cardinal Marc Ouellet, Prefect of this Dicastery, and other members of the staff who continue to serve in this Congregation.
- 6- We will visit the Canadian Pontifical College that hosts Canadian priests doing graduate studies in Theology at pontifical universities. We will also meet the Canadian Ambassador to the Holy See, His Excellency, Mr. Dennis Savoie. The ambassador of the Holy Father in our country, His Excellency Bishop Luigi Bonazzi, Apostolic Nuncio, came to our diocese on June 12th for the feast of Saint Anthony of Padua, in the context of our centennial celebration.
- 7- During my absence, Msgr. Patrick Lafleur C.H.H., Vicar-General, will assume responsibility for the diocese, assisted by Father Léo Rancourt, Episcopal Vicar. I thank them in advance for this ecclesial service.
- 8- During times of liturgical celebrations, I want to assure you that I will keep the faithful of the Diocese of Timmins in my prayers: our families, our sick, our young people, the priests, deacons, persons mandated in pastoral ministry, people committed to their faith, those who are distant.

In this liturgical time that centres us on the mystery of Christ who died and rose for our salvation, may his light shine on each one.



✠ Serge Poitras

Bishop of Timmins