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**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ARCHBISHOP PRENDERGAST COMMENTS ON THE ELECTION OF
POPE FRANCIS**

The Most Reverend Terrence Prendergast, S.J., Archbishop of Ottawa, on learning that Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, a Jesuit from Argentina, was elected Pope, made the following statement:

“It is with great joy and thanksgiving that I extend my fraternal greetings and prayerful best wishes to the Holy Father, Pope Francis, on his election as Bishop of Rome. This is truly a historic moment for the Church when Her universal character is manifested to the world!

I am convinced that today, more than ever, the world needs the humble and authentic witness of the Vicar of Christ fulfilling in his ministry the promise that Jesus made to the Apostolic College under Peter’s guidance: *remember, I am with you always until the end of the age* (Matthew 28.20).

The Petrine ministry is a great gift to the world and a prophetic sign of the heavenly Father’s continuing involvement in the lives of his people, manifesting providential concern for all, especially the poor and marginalized. Pope Francis has sent a powerful message in the choice of his name for the Church’s preferential option for the poor.

The Catholic Church in Ottawa looks forward with joyful hearts to celebrating a Mass of Thanksgiving on Tuesday, March 19th on the Solemnity of St. Joseph, Universal Patron and Guardian of the Church here at Notre Dame Cathedral in honour of our new pope.

Together, the Catholic community in Ottawa prays that the ministry of Pope Francis will continue the extraordinary contributions of Blessed Pope John Paul II and of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. The Church has been blessed by their example of personal holiness, profound teaching and true apostolic zeal for evangelization. We look forward with joyful anticipation to Pope Francis’s ministry as successor of St. Peter and Vicar of Christ.

In Canada, we celebrate the broad cross-section of the Church’s cultural richness and linguistic diversity. In our own local circumstances, we see manifest the oneness of the Universal Church and so we rejoice in a special way with a Pope from the Americas. In these tumultuous times,

we support with our prayer and personal good wishes Pope Francis's ministry of the New Evangelization, spreading of the Good News of Jesus Christ as the answer to the search for the ultimate meaning of life that weighs heavily on the hearts of many across the world.”

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