



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**POPE BENEDICT XVI ELEVATES ARCHBISHOP THOMAS COLLINS
TO THE COLLEGE OF CARDINALS**

TORONTO (January 6, 2012) – This morning following Mass at the Vatican, the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, announced that His Grace, Thomas Collins, Archbishop of Toronto, will be elevated to the College of Cardinals, an international group of principal advisors to the Pontiff.

Archbishop Collins commented on his appointment:

"I am deeply honoured that the Holy Father has called me to be a member of the College of Cardinals. I am grateful for the trust he has placed in me, and recognize this honour as a sign of his esteem for the role of Canada and of the Archdiocese of Toronto in the universal Church. I ask the people of the Archdiocese, whom I am privileged to serve as bishop, and all people in the community, to pray for me and for all who serve Our Lord through ministry in the Church."

Born and raised in Guelph, Ontario, Thomas Collins was ordained a priest in 1973. Pope John Paul II named him Bishop of St. Paul, Alberta in 1997 and Archbishop of Edmonton in 1999. Pope Benedict later appointed him as the 10th archbishop of Toronto on December 16, 2006.

The formal consistory, at which the new cardinals will be created, will take place February 18-19 in Rome. Cardinal-designate Collins will become the fourth cardinal in the 110-year history of the Archdiocese of Toronto and the 16th cardinal in the history of the Roman Catholic Church in Canada.

The College of Cardinals is convened at the discretion of the Holy Father to discuss issues of significance – most members serve on committees covering a variety of matters. When the papacy is vacant (ie. death of the pope), all cardinals under the age of 80 gather in Rome for a closed meeting, called a conclave, to elect a new pope.

The Archdiocese of Toronto is Canada's largest diocese, stretching from Toronto north to Georgian Bay and from Oshawa to Mississauga. It is home to 1.9 million Catholics and 225 churches, with Mass celebrated in more than 30 different languages each week.

Photos and biographical information regarding Archbishop Collins' appointment to the College of Cardinals can be found online at: www.archtoronto.org

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Neil MacCarthy – Director, Public Relations & Communications, Archdiocese of Toronto

Phone (416) 934-3400 x 552 Cell: (416) 879-2846 neilm@archtoronto.org www.archtoronto.org

Bill Steinburg – Communications Manager, Public Relations & Communications

Phone (416) 934-3400 x 558 Cell: (416) 708-9655 bills@archtoronto.org www.archtoronto.org