

**ADDRESS OF THE APOSTOLIC NUNCIO
THE CARDINAL'S DINNER
TORONTO NOVEMBER 6, 2014**

Your Eminence, Cardinal Collins,
My brother Bishops,
Distinguished Guests,
Dear friends,

I am very pleased and honoured to be with you this evening for the 2014 'Cardinal's Dinner' which brings together the leaders of various sectors of Toronto Society – ecclesial, political, economic and social. Your presence here this evening demonstrates that Toronto is a city with a big heart, where leaders of the community come together to show their concern for the least in our midst not only in this important venue but on so many other occasions throughout the course of the year.

As you well know, civic society and the Church have a distinct nature and mission. The very mission that Christ entrusted to his Church is not of the political, economic or social order: the Christian community is born from the Holy Spirit in order to proclaim the Kingdom of God. Yet, it is precisely through the Gospel, through its evangelizing mission that the Church offers its unique and specific contribution to the building up of the human family. The foundational document of the Second Vatican Council, "Gaudium et Spes" said this beautifully: "*For the force which the Church can inject into the modern society of man consists in that faith and charity put into vital practice, not in any external dominion exercised by merely human means*" (#42).

The service that civic society and the Church develop for the common good of the people is therefore a service that is fulfilled through very distinct activities and modalities: **distinct but not distant** from one another. Thus, it is important and even healthy to cultivate relations that respect this distinction and to avoid keeping a distance from one another. I wish for each of you: good relations, and the desire to work together with perseverance and courage for the building of good relations. What is at stake is the common good, the good of our people!

It has been said that ideas change the world. I speak here of ideas that will ignite a light in the mind and heart of a person, making him capable of engaging all of his energies, all of his life, in the realization of that one idea. Allow me to offer you an idea, a challenge of Pope Francis. It is a question for me, personally, and for

everyone of us here: *“How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points?”* (Evangelii Gaudium, 53).

Dear friends, let us allow this idea to take root in our lives. Let us allow it to resound deep within us, and with the help of God, let us seek to unite our talents in order to respond together to this challenge. We so often speak of Canada as a land of opportunity. May it be so, not only in name but also in reality! I hope and pray that your presence at these tables this evening will contribute to making this great city a place where all are welcome, where no one is left behind, where no person is discarded.

On behalf of our Holy Father, Pope Francis, I am pleased to convey to your well-loved Cardinal Archbishop, and to each one gathered here as well as the communities, sectors and institutions you represent, his Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of peace and joy in the Lord.