

Appendix B

ADDRESS OF WELCOME

Your Excellency, Reverend Chairman, Members of the Association and ladies and gentlemen:

My sole task this evening is to welcome you to the Archdiocese in the city of Toronto. This I do most heartily and joyfully. But I cannot limit my salutation to a simple welcome—*bienvenu—bienvenidos—benvenuti*. I do hope that Toronto, in all its aspects, will live up to its rather famous reputation. As you know we are about to play host to the seven most important industrial countries of the West and you may find certain inconveniences, but I would not want you to feel that you are in any way in the shadow of the great. Greatness is a very ambiguous term and a gathering of theologians should be the last in the world to be over-impressed by what the world calls great.

My own love of theology goes back to my youth and particularly to my seminary days when I was fortunate enough to study under some great teachers of the *Société de Saint-Sulpice* in Montreal. That love has been maintained even though, unfortunately for me, I have not been able to pursue that wisdom as much as I would have liked. The struggle for pastoral and administrative responsibility has all too often absorbed my time and my energy. I always have liked the story of the people who could never see their bishop because he was reported as studying. They finally petitioned Rome for a bishop who had finished his studies. I don't think any of us ever finish our studies but some of us pursue them without ever catching up.

I am not going to fall into the trap of trying to tell you how to conduct your assizes. But will you in your charity permit your host bishop, and a senior one at that—I am one of the few remaining veterans of the four sessions of the Council still in office—to ask a favour. So much time and effort have been expended on the administrative, political and even power struggles in the church that I would hope you will make a contribution along other lines. All of us are crying out for in-depth perceptions of God's revelation of Himself. We are not so much concerned with who is ordained as to what people are ordained to achieve. We are not at all interested, at least I am not, in whether girls should serve at the altar, but we are tremendously interested in what goes on at the altar. We are hungry for the mystery and the transcendent. We know that we live a paradoxical existence and the revelation of God in the Incarnation has balanced us between the world of the flesh and the world of the spirit. We don't want the paradox solved but we want you ladies and gentlemen to help us to understand its complexity and to penetrate its mystery.

We thank you for your efforts. It would appear that the conflictual issue of opposition between the magisterium and the theologians is dying a more or less peaceful death. Let it go. Let us all try to be servants first of all of the Word of God and of one another.

† G. EMMETT CARDINAL CARTER
Archbishop of Toronto